

The Nation.

THE NEW STUDENT MOVEMENT

Liza Featherstone



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EXCHANGE

Lead—Balloons & Bouquets

Arlington, Mass.

■ I finally decided to subscribe because of an article that made me sick to my stomach. "The Secret History of Lead" by Jamie Lincoln Kitman [March 20] was so rich in technical and historical detail and so incisive in its social analysis that it colors my whole view of the American Century. The author (and whoever helped in the editorial department) is to be commended for brilliantly combining a command of the technology with a sense of how to shape a great story.

ANDREW ORAM

Maplewood, N.J.

■ As an engineer, I read with great interest and emotion your issue on lead additives. I have passed around my copy to any clear-minded person I know, wondering perhaps if there would be any left after what was done. "The Secret History of Lead" is one of the greatest pieces of investigative journalism on the environment and politics. Jamie Lincoln Kitman should be awarded a Pulitzer Prize for courageously documenting the disastrous public policy and catastrophic health impact created by the collusion of big money and government.

FRED NGUYEN

Sacramento, Calif.

■ Last night I read all of the lead article, a fine piece of work, and arose this morning to the paper's banner headline WHITE HOUSE SEEKS BAN ON MTBE IN GAS. What a stupefying fit!

As a consultant working on biomass ethanol projects in California, where the MTBE problem is becoming more pronounced, I find it amazing to see how the vestiges of corporatism as documented by Kitman continue to run roughshod over us all. The morning paper says MTBE was put in gasoline to replace lead when the air pollution it caused could no longer be tolerated. And, according to a recent *60 Minutes* on MTBE, the petroleum industry chose MTBE—a petrochemical—as the substitute for lead even though it knew that ethanol would be as good or better and that ethanol would not pollute the air or water like MTBE. The inescapable conclusion is that the corporatists pulled the same trick on us twice, once with lead, then with MTBE.

MICHAEL J. GREENE

Clarkston, Mich.

■ Having spent my thirty-five-year career at General Motors as part of the team that led the world in achieving major reductions in vehicle emissions and spurred the development of clean fuels, I have to believe that Jamie Kitman must be a proponent of the "half the truth is good

enough" school. Yes, lead is poisonous. Yes, lead is bad for catalytic converters. No, now is *not* the time for GM to advocate a worldwide phaseout of leaded gasoline. *GM did that more than thirty years ago*, when it started the program to eliminate lead in gasoline and use catalytic converters. GM worked to convince the US oil industry and the lead suppliers to get the lead out. That example has spread around the world. Contrary to Kitman, the World Bank, in its recent push for worldwide lead removal from gasoline, is the Johnny Come Lately here.

Taking lead out of gasoline certainly makes sense. But the decision rests with the governments of the developing countries still using lead, not with the automakers. They would be more than willing to supply vehicles with catalytic converters if unleaded gasoline was available, and they have consistently urged these countries to move to unleaded gasoline.

In the past thirty years, GM has made many pioneering contributions to reduce vehicle emissions and provide cleaner air. GM's research led the call for reformulated gasoline, which is now 30–35 percent of the gasoline used in the United States. Both the EPA and the California Air Resources Board have cited reformulated gasoline as the second-largest contributor to reducing vehicle emissions, after the combination of unleaded gasoline and catalytic converters, which GM pioneered.

JOSEPH M. COLUCCI, *president*
Automotive Fuels Consulting, Inc.

Washington, D.C.

■ Your article's greatest value is that it relates the history of lead to the current production, use and marketing of this toxic product, especially in the developing world. Readers will be heartened to know that advocates for children's health, social justice and sustainability are battling corporations profiting from leaded gasoline. The Alliance to End Childhood Lead Poisoning (www.globalleadnet.org), a US-based NGO, is coordinating an international campaign to eliminate leaded gasoline and redress irresponsible corporate behavior.

DON RYAN

Hanover, N.H.

■ Further evidence of the problems caused by leaded gasoline has emerged from my research with chemical engineer Myron J. Coplan, funded by the EPA and the Earhart Foundation. Although your article includes only a passing reference to the connection between lead and violent behavior, the likely neurochemical reasons for the effect have been clearly established, and

we have found evidence confirming that it explains a lot about US crime rates. Re-analysis of annual crime data shows that the phase-out of leaded gas was directly paralleled by a decline in the murder rate. This is another way that taking lead out of gasoline has saved lives.

ROGER D. MASTERS

Rowayton, Conn.

■ Jamie Kitman's article was one of the most disturbing pieces of journalism I've seen in years. This article so clearly articulates that the greed and poor judgment of big business (in this case GM, Du Pont and Standard Oil) have done irreparable damage to our nation's health and environment while, knowingly, Big Brother looked the other way. More shameful is that despite all we have learned about the damage lead does, we continue to exploit the economies and risk the health of Third World nations for a cavalier profit motive.

JESSE L. PAYNTER

New York City

■ There is no question that the phaseout of leaded gasoline had a major positive impact on public health. However, your phrasing of Dr. Sergio Piomelli's statement to the effect that after the US lead phaseout was complete only "1,500 of 100,000" New York City children tested had "similarly high [lead] levels" may leave a somewhat misleading sense of the extent of childhood lead poisoning today.

As the state of scientific knowledge of lead's adverse impacts has advanced, the threshold at which the level of lead in a child's blood is considered "lead poisoning" has been steadily lowered. Thus, in New York City there are currently some 30,000 or more children each year (the vast majority from communities of color) with blood-lead levels that meet or exceed the definition of lead poisoning in the city's health code and the federal Centers for Disease Control guidelines. It is widely acknowledged that the overwhelming source of poisonings is from lead paint remaining in older dwellings. An examination of the role of the Lead Industry Association and the paint pigment manufacturers in this other aspect of the public health debacle over lead would be a fine subject for another *Nation* special report by Kitman.

MATTHEW J. CHACHÈRE
Counsel to the New York City
Coalition to End Lead Poisoning

Columbiaville, Mich.

■ As far as addressing a *symptom* of automobiles, the article on lead is right on. But how about addressing the core problem, the use of automobiles in general? Kitman, obviously a

(Continued on Page 24)

IN THIS ISSUE

EXCHANGE

- 2 LEAD—BALLOONS & BOUQUETS
Andrew Oram, Fred Nguyen, Michael J. Greene, Joseph M. Colucci, Don Ryan, Roger D. Masters, Jesse L. Paynter, Matthew J. Chachère, Qani Belul, Charles E. Reid, Richard S. Gaines, Stephen M.M. Midgley, Abby Vigneron, Charles Pool, Jamie Lincoln Kitman

EDITORIALS & COMMENT

- 3 ELIÁN SÍ, COLD WAR NO
 4 MIRANDA'S ENEMIES
 5 RESTARTING THE CTBT
Garrett Epps
 6 LOOPHOLE.COM
Peter Schrag
 7 IN FACT...
 8 THE BEAT
John Nichols

COLUMNS

- 9 MINORITY REPORT
Bloom's Way
Christopher Hitchens
 10 SUBJECT TO DEBATE
Dr. Laura, Be Quiet!
Katha Pollitt

ARTICLES

- 11 THE NEW STUDENT MOVEMENT
Protests rock the corporate university.
Liza Featherstone
 16 HIP-HOP POLITICS ON CAMPUS
Johnny Temple
 18 VIETNAM: A CRACKED MIRROR
The US image we still see is that of a failed imperial power.
Peter Davis
 21 LETTER FROM SOUTH CAROLINA
The fight over the Confederate battle flag is just part of a new Southern offensive.
Ron Nixon

- 22 THE COLOR OF SPRAWL
William Steif

BOOKS & THE ARTS

- 25 LOST IN AMAZONIA
Wendy Steiner
 30 SHAWCROSS: Deliver Us From Evil: Peacekeepers, Warlords and a World of Endless Conflict
Ian Williams
 33 THEATER
The Real Thing
The Invention of Love
Elizabeth Pochoda
 34 FILMS
Black and White
Me Myself I
East Is East
Stuart Klawans

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EDITORIALS

Elián Sí, Cold War No

It will be a long time before we forget the picture flashed around the world of Elián González being rescued at gunpoint. The spectacle of INS agents forcibly entering a private home to rescue the boy alarmed those who care about civil liberties. And from that company we exclude the NRA commandos, who say the raid proves we need guns to fend off jackbooted Feds. And law-and-order pols like Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who can inveigh against "stormtroopers" but defend the cops who gun down an unarmed Amadou Diallo. And Republicans who have pushed through anti-immigrant legislation that denies illegal aliens their day in court.

The resort to paramilitary tactics to rescue the boy can be questioned in hindsight—and the Republicans, sensing the mileage to be gained from concocting a Clinton-Reno-Gregory Craig-Council of Churches-Castro plot, intend to question it to a fare-thee-well in Congressional hearings likely to be shrill and partisan. But serious civil libertarians will ask, What was the alternative? Negotiations? After months, negotiations had produced *nada*. You had a child virtually held hostage, the Miami Gonzálezes in contempt of the law, local officials refusing to cooperate and federal cops with a proper search warrant. Janet Reno did the right thing for the right reasons.

The Elián episode provides proof, if any is needed, that the exiles who dictate US Cuba policy are so blinded by hatred of Fidel Castro they're beyond reason. It also provoked what is likely to be an irreparable breach between the Cuban-American extremists and the Clinton Administration, which had been eager to court this

voting bloc and pool of campaign donors. With the professional Castro-haters discredited and the tether between the White House and Little Havana cut, now's the time to re-examine the larger matter at hand: relations between the United States and Cuba.

By resolutely adhering to the idea that the Elián case involved a father who had the right to custody of his son, Reno, it could be said, "normalized" Cuban-US relations, placing them in the context of people rather than cold war politics. Conservative and Republican allies of the Cuban-American die-hards shelved their family values to turn Elián into ammunition for the anti-Communist cause. Had there been normal relations between the United States and Cuba—or something like it—this family-rending tragedy would not have happened. The case has exposed the absurdity of the travel and commerce embargo the United States maintains on Cuba. The hard-line anti-Castroites, who have been shedding tears over Elián's welfare and the plight of his family, have no problem with keeping medicine, food, books, athletic equipment, magazines and toys from the tykes (and grown-ups) in Cuba. Nor do they bemoan the US-imposed restrictions on travel and financial remittances that prevent Cuban-Americans from regularly visiting relatives in Cuba or sending more than modest amounts of money to their relatives. The Elián affair has demonstrated that there is no integrity in our Cuba policy: If we care so much about Cuban people chafing under the totalitarian yoke, why not drop the trade and travel ban that harms Cuban families but fails in its supposed purpose of bringing down Castro?

The Elián case could force US-Cuba relations to center-stage—that is, if the GOP sideshow doesn't steal the attention. Will President Clinton seize the moment to refashion US-Cuba relations?

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Four years ago, when he signed the Helms-Burton Act—which made the embargo a matter of US law, not executive order—he became the first President who can't lift the embargo alone but must persuade Congress to rescind the law. He does, however, have a say in how the embargo is shaped. And he can expand trade in some areas, including agriculture, information and tourism. Clinton could try deploying moderate rhetoric to detoxify relations between Washington and Havana. And he could push Congress. Last year a measure to end the ban on exporting food and medicine to Cuba nearly succeeded—until the Cuban-American lobby killed it.

That lobby, which has had so much clout for the past twenty years, has gone too far in the Elián affair. Polls show that 60 percent of Americans favor Reno's use of force to extricate Elián, and 68 percent oppose Congressional hearings on the raid. Will Clinton exercise leadership? Given the rising partisan heat, we have no great hopes. And his would-be successors are stuck in the past. The political tectonics have shifted. Hard-line Cuban-Americans are beyond reconciliation, while much of the country would like US-Cuba relations moved to a more normal plane.

For now, a father and son have been reunited. That's a positive outcome. But the affair has also removed the Clinton Administration from the custody of the Cuban-American lobby. It will be a policy tragedy if Clinton does not try to use this new freedom—despite GOP attacks—to take US-Cuba relations to a point where such a soap opera cannot be repeated.

Miranda's Enemies

Will the *Miranda* rule survive? It's always dangerous to prophesy the outcome of a case from the entrails of Supreme Court argument, but civil libertarians felt cautious relief on April 19 after the Supreme Court heard arguments in *Dickerson v. United States*. In *Dickerson*, conservative legal scholar Paul Cassell, arguing to uphold a ruling by the notoriously right-wing Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, contended that the 1966 Supreme Court decision immortalizing the right to an attorney and the right to silence ought to be tossed out. The Court's conservative bloc appeared profoundly divided, with Justices Kennedy and O'Connor seemingly unhappy with overturning so established a precedent as *Miranda*. That suggests *Dickerson* may go the way of *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* in 1992, in which O'Connor and Kennedy provided the swing votes upholding abortion rights.

But if the April 19 hearing hints that the outcome of *Dickerson* may not be as devastating as some fear, this is still a signal case on several fronts. The plaintiff, Charles Dickerson, a Virginia bank robber, was convicted on the basis of incriminating statements he made just before being read his *Miranda* warning. The US District Court for Eastern Virginia threw Dickerson's conviction out, but it was reinstated by the Fourth Circuit Appeals Court in 1999. In a direct challenge to the *Miranda* rules, the appeals court embraced a theory put forth by Cassell, a University of Utah professor, in an influential law review article claiming that *Miranda* isn't really a constitutional case and should have been superseded by a far looser set of interrogation rules—passed by

EDITORIALS

Congress in 1968 and known as Section 3501—which have never been invoked by any Administration.

If the Supreme Court overrules the Fourth Circuit, it will be another slap at the most boldly conservative appellate bloc in the nation. Only days before the *Dickerson* hearing, the High Court held unconstitutional two Fourth Circuit rulings that would have virtually ended habeas corpus reviews of death penalty cases. *Dickerson* is also significant because of Cassell's prominence as a conservative legal thinker. His writings form the nexus between two seemingly unrelated legal projects—the weakening of criminal due-process laws by overturning rulings, like *Miranda*, that expanded defendants' rights, and the so-called Crime Victims' Rights Amendment to the Constitution, which came before the Senate on April 25. Cassell is a prime architect of the latter misleadingly named amendment, which would significantly weaken procedural protections for defendants while providing nothing of substance to crime victims. Both campaigns rely on the myths that thousands of criminals are evading prosecution because of *Miranda* and that crime victims have no voice in the legal system. Cassell has sought to discredit *Miranda* by alleging that the real problem is not false confessions by innocent defendants but “lost” confessions by guilty ones, who are deterred by the warning; and that since *Miranda* the “clearance rate” of crimes—the proportion of felonies solved—has dropped. In fact, clearance rates have fallen since the mid-sixties for a host of reasons, ranging from taking neighborhood cops off foot patrols and putting them in sedans to new rules that have ended the practice of boosting clearance rates by dumping unsolvable petty felonies into “Inspector McCann.”

The attack on *Miranda* as well as the Crime Victims' Rights Amendment are part of a broader project spawned in the sixties by legal conservatives and reflected in today's Fourth Circuit Appeals Court: overturning the Warren Court's due process revolution and shifting the basis of criminal law to give more power to prosecutors than at any time in American history. While *Dickerson* may not prove a deathblow to *Miranda*, it may—like *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, which reaffirmed *Roe* only to dodge hard questions of how far states may go in regulating abortion—chip away at Bill of Rights protections and open the door for years of unsettled debate.

COMMENT

Restarting the CTBT

As the White House clocks count down to the end of Bill Clinton's term, he must be thinking about one shortfall of his legacy: His is the first Administration in more than twenty years not to achieve ratification of a major arms-control agreement. Even in this post-cold war world, nuclear arms remain a danger to world peace. The CIA has informed the White House that it cannot be sure Iran has not acquired nuclear capability. India and Pakistan are newly nuclear. The new Kremlin leadership warns that it may employ its huge nuclear arsenal for a first

strike “in the case of the need to repulse an armed aggression, if all other methods of resolving the crisis situation are exhausted or have been ineffective.”

The United States bears some responsibility for the increased nuclear danger. The Republican-led Senate last fall trashed a goal of US foreign policy since 1958—the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which Clinton signed in 1996. This is the first-ever rejection by the United States of a major arms-control agreement. The rejection has complicated US efforts to discourage nuclear proliferation and put America on the defensive worldwide. President Vladimir Putin has also shown that he wants to pursue disarmament. At his behest, the Russian Parliament ratified the START II treaty in April and seems poised to approve the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Reportedly, the Democrats plan some harsh commercials in the fall. But what should a President do if he decides that sixty-second issue spots just aren't enough? He could gas up Air Force One and head off on one of the boldest moves of his presidency—a trip to Geneva to sign the CTBT again.

What would such a trip accomplish? Nothing is clear-cut in international law, but the Senate's rejection publicly took the United States out of the ambit of the treaty, meaning GOP leaders are free to claim we are no longer bound by it—and to resume testing without further official action if the White House changes hands. The President's signature would bring us back in, Senate approval or no. The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties provides that a “state is obliged to refrain from acts which would defeat the object and purpose of a treaty when...it has signed the treaty or...it has expressed its consent to be bound by the treaty.” This Administration still considers itself bound and has said so; but re-signing would create an unambiguous binding international obligation not to begin a new program of testing. The only way a new Administration could void that obligation would be to renounce the treaty formally. This voluntary re-entry into the treaty system would give the White House some small added leverage as it attempts to persuade India and Pakistan to halt their arms race.

There's no question that the Republicans intended their vote against the treaty to free a new Administration to test. When Secretary of State Madeleine Albright notified diplomats after the rejection vote that the United States still considered itself bound by the CTBT, Senator Jesse Helms cited a distorted version of Article 18 to rebuke her. “Since the Senate is a coequal in treaty-making and the Senate has overwhelmingly vetoed the CTBT, the intention to never become a party has been made crystal clear,” he said November 2. But Helms has the convention and the Constitution wrong.

The power to negotiate and sign treaties is solely an executive prerogative—and nothing in the Constitution would prevent the President from signing the treaty again. In the 1936 case *United States v. Curtiss-Wright Export*, the Supreme Court (no friend of executive authority) held that President Roosevelt could bar exports of weapons to foreign countries even without Congressional authorization. “The President alone has the power to speak or listen as a representative of the nation,” wrote Justice George Sutherland. “He makes treaties with the advice and

COMMENT

consent of the Senate; but he alone negotiates. Into the field of negotiation the Senate cannot intrude; and Congress itself is powerless to invade it."

For that reason, a Senate rejection of a treaty can't bar the President from signing it again—or bind future Senates "never" to approve it. Not even a bill passed by both houses over a presidential veto could bind Clinton—or any future President—to sign or not sign a particular treaty. In fact, if the President were to re-sign the treaty tomorrow, this Senate would not necessarily get a chance to reject it again. Only the President can submit a treaty for Senate approval.

And that brings us to the domestic advantages of re-signing the CTBT. Right now, the issue of nuclear testing is missing from the 2000 campaign. Efforts to raise it can be blunted by soothing assurances that a Republican will negotiate a new treaty without the factitious "flaws" of the present one. Even if the Republicans were sincere, the likelihood of a new, "improved" treaty is practically nil; the Senate's abandonment of the CTBT has convinced most diplomats—particularly those of the emerging nuclear powers—that the United States is not serious about preventing proliferation.

But if Clinton bound the United States to the treaty, the debate would necessarily shift: Will you, he could ask potential successors, promise not to abrogate this treaty? Given the popularity of a test ban (a poll by the Wirthlin Group last year showed that seven out of ten voters "strongly" favor the present treaty), it would be difficult for a candidate to answer no.

Equally important, it would shift the rhetorical ground. The far-right assault on arms control has rolled relentlessly forward, abetted by Clinton Administration spinelessness. Abrogation of the ABM treaty, a key goal of the right, is now a respectable bipartisan option, touted by George W. Bush as a way to bring "certainty" to the world. Soon the think tanks and Op-Eds will begin a drumbeat of attacks on SALT and START. The spectacle of a national leader putting himself on the line for a test ban might begin to shift perceptions about the stakes in the debate.

Although Clinton has the power to re-sign the CTBT, the cooler heads who always seem to prevail in the face of right-wing irresponsibility will caution that re-signing is provocative, even inflammatory. There is no question that it pushes presidential authority to the limit. But there is nothing new about that: Clinton has had to learn to govern in the face of a hostile and often frivolous Congressional majority. Given some of the weakening

of the office that has occurred on his watch, it might be tempting indeed to end his term with an action that would reassert executive primacy in foreign policy. Besides, if the Republicans don't like it, what are they going to do? Impeach him? GARRETT EPPS

Garrett Epps teaches constitutional law at the University of Oregon. His new book, To an Unknown God: Religious Freedom on Trial, will be published by St. Martin's Press.

loophole.com

As imagination-stretchers go, it's hard to conjure up anything more bizarre than a description of Amazon.com, Cisco Systems, Yahoo, Dell Computers et al. as infant industries, quasi mom-and-pops that need special protection. But that seems to be the underlying argument as Congress confronts what, despite its complex technical details, ought to be a relatively simple decision: Should goods purchased over the Internet be subject to the same sales taxes as items bought over the counter from your local computer outlet, appliance dealer or department store?

The answer ought to be obvious. The National Governors Association, citing a University of Tennessee study, estimates that by 2003 state and local governments will lose \$20 billion in sales tax revenues if Internet sales are exempted, savings that will go largely to those on the affluent side of the digital divide, not to those who can't afford computers and have no access to the Internet. And while there's uncertainty about the immediate sales tax losses, there's no doubt that the amount will increase if the sales tax advantage is extended and helps drive brick-and-mortar businesses to the wall.

But the issue here is not simply the loss of revenues to maintain roads or to pay teachers and firefighters. Nor is it just a matter of fairness—if the local bookstore, which is often the real mom and pop, charges sales tax, why shouldn't Amazon.com have to charge it as well? The more fundamental issue may be the vitality of whole communities, which have to depend on their Main Street merchants for the support of everything from the United Way and uniforms for the Little League to the advertising that sustains local newspapers and broadcasters: Drive out the brick-and-mortar merchants and there's no downtown left.

Under the Supreme Court's 1992 decision in the case of *Quill v. North Dakota*, only Congress can require retailers who don't have a local "nexus"—a store or warehouse or service establishment—to charge and pay sales taxes to state and local jurisdictions. As a result, even outfits like Borders and Barnes & Noble have now legally bifurcated themselves so they can avoid sales taxes on their online sales. The same dodge is used by the thousands of phone-order merchandisers whose catalogues choke the mails. Land's End has to pay sales tax on its shipments in Wisconsin, where it's located, but nothing in the other forty-nine states.

In 1998 Congress imposed a three-year moratorium on new e-commerce legislation and created a nineteen-member Advisory Commission on Electronic Commerce to help it figure out what to do. The commission, heavy with executives of Internet-related corporations (AOL, MCI, Gateway, AT&T), recommended a five-

EDITORIALS & COMMENT

You'll notice that starting this week this section of the magazine has been subdivided under two rubrics: Editorials and Comment. The purpose of this division is to separate the editorials, which represent the voice of the magazine and are unsigned, from the contributions of outside writers, which reflect their own style and opinions and do not necessarily express the magazine's position on an issue.

COMMENT

year extension of the moratorium. But Al Gore, George W. Bush, House minority leader Richard Gephardt and even California's liberal Senator Barbara Boxer are so bedazzled by the romance of high tech and by Silicon Valley cash that they're falling all over themselves to accommodate the industry. Gore, Bush and Gephardt all pledged to extend the moratorium, which is to expire in October 2001, until at least 2003 or 2004, while others, among them John McCain, have argued for a permanent Internet sales tax exemption.

In December William Janklow, the Republican Governor of South Dakota, speaking on behalf of many of his fellow governors and for most national organizations of mayors and other local officials, pleaded for Congress to create a national system to collect Internet sales taxes and remit them to the states and localities where the purchasers live. "Success in America," he said, "shouldn't be based on loopholes." But for the most part, the governors and the mayors have been swimming upstream in Washington.

Back in 1984, when Gary Hart—seeking the Democratic nomination—proposed a national industrial policy, he was derided inside the Beltway for wanting to let the government pick

economic winners and losers. Ironically, this is precisely what an extended moratorium entails, to say nothing about a permanent exemption. "The best and quickest way to kill the golden goose of the Internet," Gephardt declared recently, "is to tax it to death." (This is the same Internet whose major entrepreneurs have in a few short years eclipsed the capitalization of the biggest corporations on earth.)

There are technical problems to work out about how to determine and collect local sales taxes for each of thousands of cities, counties and other local districts, all of them with their own (mutable) rates and varying definitions of what is taxed and what isn't. But there already exists some software suited for this task, and, given the aforesaid marvels of high tech, is there any doubt that more sophisticated software can be developed? As a number of people told the commission, this isn't a matter of taxing the Internet; it's a matter of taxing the transactions on it. The alternative is a gradual erosion of the ability of virtually every town in America to sustain itself as a community. PETER SCHRAG

Peter Schrag, former editorial page editor of the Sacramento Bee, is a frequent Nation contributor.

In Fact...

GRANNY D'S CAPITOL ADVENTURE

They can't arrest Granny D, can they? Say it ain't so. Well, they did. Doris Haddock, the 90-year-old woman who walked across America to promote campaign finance reform, joined an intrepid bunch of troublemakers known as the John Muir Democracy Brigade, who invaded the Capitol Rotunda to speak reform to power. The JMDB, which merged finance reformers with environmental activists, arrived at the Senate lawn on April 21, the day before Earth Day. At a press conference Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature*, said a broad consensus is developing about the menace of global warming. "The only people that seem not to get it work in that building behind us, [which] may have something to do with the millions and millions of dollars that flow into that building from the interests that do not want to change the status quo." After telling the group, "We must declare our independence from the corrupting bonds of big money," Granny D led the thirty-two demonstrators into the Rotunda, bearing large banners proclaiming CAMPAIGN FINANCE CORRUPTION LEADS TO ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION and kindred sentiments. Inside, the activists divided into six groups, spoke their pieces and were arrested by Capitol police. They were ordered to appear in court on May 24. This was the fourth Democracy Brigade demonstration (see "In Fact..." April 3). The Democracy Brigade is an arm of the Alliance for Democracy, founded by Ronnie Dugger. (for information: 781-894-9726).

GLOBAL UNFAIRNESS

The AFL-CIO's Executive PayWatch project tracks the widening chasm between workers' and CEOs' pay. In its latest bulletin (www.paywatch.org) PayWatch discloses that in 1999 the average CEO of a major US corporation made \$12.4 million—475 times what the average worker drew, compared with 42 times in 1980. The average CEO got a 17 percent raise over 1998; workers' real wages have dropped 9 percent from the base year 1973. The CEO-worker pay difference is far greater here than in other industrialized countries: In Germany it's thirteen times and in Japan, eleven. The AFL-CIO analysis also contrasts the pay of CEOs of global corporations with that of their "outsourced" workers in poorer countries. For example, GE's Jack Welch snagged over \$92 million in 1999 while the company's 30,000 Mexican employees averaged \$6,200 a year. Thus, Welch earned about half his total Mexican payroll. (NB: Since 1986 GE has cut its US work force by 50 percent and nearly doubled its foreign employees.) Gap CEO Millard Drexler's paycheck totaled \$7.9 million in 1999, and he has accumulated stock options of \$685 million. Gap workers in Russia get 11 cents an hour; in Honduras, \$4 a day.

GLOBAL ECOCIDE

A new study sponsored by the World Bank, along with the UN Environmental Program,

the UN Development Program and the World Resources Institute, details the widespread destruction of the planet's ecosystems. *People and Ecosystems: The Fraying Web of Life*, to be released in September, reports that half the world's wetlands and forests were lost in the past century, substantial soil degradation impacts two-thirds of all agricultural land, 20 percent of freshwater fish are extinct, threatened or endangered. The World Resources Institute points out that poor people who fish and work the land suffer most from this degradation.

UNGUIDED MISSILES

In three separate incidents in April, missiles were misfired in the former Soviet Union. A Russian dummy cruise missile hit a ship on the Black Sea. A Ukrainian tactical missile crashed into an apartment complex, killing three people. And a Russian rocket landed near a village in Kazakhstan. None of these weapons were nuclear armed, but isn't it about time the United States and Russia resumed serious nuclear disarmament talks?

NEWS OF THE WEAK IN REVIEW

After reporting day after day the latest developments in the endless Elián González story, CNN anchor Wolf Blitzer apparently had some kind of weird flashback. He announced: "More on Monica Lewinsky—I mean Elián González!—later in the program."



THE BEAT



County Fairs and Fairness Vermont's passage of "civil union" legislation, which provides gay and lesbian couples most rights and protections afforded straight married couples, didn't just happen. Credit

goes to groups like the **Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force**, which has worked for five years to change hearts and minds in the state. Even before Vermont's Supreme Court forced legislators to address equity issues, says task force board member **Deborah Lashman**, "We talked to anybody who would listen—Chamber of Commerce meetings, clubs, schools." Even county fairs were targeted. "We always have a big booth at the fair—with photos of couples, everything." The fieldwork paid off; by the time this spring's legislative votes approached, the task force had supporters in every Vermont county. One convert was Vermont State Senator **Helen Riehle**, who said meetings with the task force helped shape her stance. "I am happy that Vermonters have led the way," she said in voting for the measure, adding that she was only sorry the legislature wasn't going all the way—by voting to allow same-gender marriages. This unabashed advocate for gay and lesbian rights is a Chittenden County Republican, a veteran of eighteen years in the legislature and twenty-eight years of marriage. Vermont activists continue to push for same-gender marriage rights and hope to export their take-it-to-the-people approach: "Vermont is definitely not the only place this kind of effort can work," Lashman says.

Seder Solidarity "The first work strike took place 5,000 years ago, when the Hebrew people walked out of Egypt," declared Temple Kol Tikvah Rabbi **Steven Jacobs** as he observed a Passover Seder with striking LA janitors. The strikers, mostly Latino Catholics, joined the traditional Seder meal in front of a building being struck by **Service Employees International Union Local 1877**. Jacobs and other religious leaders were later arrested after committing civil disobedience to support the strikers. A settlement was reached on Easter and workers ratified it the next day.

Wrestling Ventura When the Minnesota State Senate voted to limit access to abortion, reproductive rights supporters had their work cut out for them. The law mandated a twenty-four-hour waiting period for women seeking abortions, required clinics to tell women in graphic detail about abortion procedures and provide information about alternatives, and included up to \$10,000 fines for doctors who disobeyed. Similar legislation had already passed in twelve other states. Only Governor Jesse Ventura's veto stood between the bill and passage, but Ventura's staff had helped craft a version of the plan so the chances that he would block it didn't look good. Minnesota's **National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League** chapter, **Planned Parenthood of Minnesota/South Dakota** and a coalition of clinics decided to hit the wrestler-turned-Governor in his conscience. After all, he had won election on a pro-choice platform. "We had just three days, so we poured our energy into getting people to call Jesse Ventura, fax his office, get a message to him that we wanted him to go back and think about his

basic beliefs," says **Tim Stanley**, Minnesota NARAL executive director. "We put out an all-points bulletin. The Governor got something like 6,000 messages from our side in seventy-two hours." Callers included **Gloria Steinem**, who had met previously with Ventura, travels to Minnesota often—"I've been to Bemidji"—and watches abortion rights fights there closely. "Minnesota is an early-warning system for the rest of the country," she explains. "The fights you see there usually end up playing out later in other states. That's why making these calls matters." The campaign worked: Ventura vetoed the bill, saying he had been wrong to consider a compromise: "We learned that there is no middle ground here." The Minnesota drive drew on sophisticated lists of state abortion rights backers developed with a grant from **The Turner Foundation**. The foundation, created by Ted Turner, has a \$25 million annual budget and directs its giving to environmental and population policy groups. Grantees include the NARAL Foundation, Planned Parenthood, the **National Abortion Federation**, **Zero Population Growth**, the **Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice** and the **National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association**. Last year the foundation began giving grants to groups in eight states where abortion rights are particularly threatened. "We put a special emphasis on helping groups develop the electronic tools necessary to contact people on their lists quickly and effectively," says **Cecile Richards**, who oversees Turner's pro-choice giving. "The Turner list made a huge difference," says NARAL's Stanley. "When an emergency arose, we were ready to move on it."



Citizen Rock "I am an artist and a citizen," says rocker **Patti Smith**. The poet and songwriter, who released her first album twenty-five years ago, displays both aspects of her persona on a fine new CD,

Gung Ho (Arista). The high priestess of punk in the seventies, Smith has been creating music over the past decade that pushes the notion expressed in the title of one of her best songs: "People Have the Power." It's a theme she'll be taking on the road this spring as she launches her most ambitious tour in years. A history buff who devours stories of Paul Revere's midnight ride, Smith sees herself as a musician-messenger calling people to action. On *Gung Ho* she seems to be doing that at every turn. Smith, who visited Vietnam while writing these songs, uses the title-track to explore similarities between Ho Chi Minh and Thomas Jefferson, both men she celebrates as having carried "the seed of revolution." On other tracks she plants her own seeds of revolution. "Glitter in Their Eyes," perhaps the closest thing to a classic pop song Smith has recorded since "Because the Night," makes reference to last fall's WTO protests in Seattle; "Strange Messengers" recounts the legacy of slavery and colonialism; and environmental themes run through songs such as "New Party." That last tune features Smith's call for a political realignment driven by citizen action: "We got to get up off our ass or get burned," she chants.

John Nichols's e-mail address is jnichols@thenation.com.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Bloom's Way

Those who follow these things have long known that Allan Bloom, the neoconservative panjandrum who helped spice up the Reaganite intellectual atmosphere by producing *The Closing of the American Mind* in 1987, was a homosexual, and that when he died in 1992 the report about "liver failure" was a cover story. He died of AIDS. It's also known that the character Abe Ravelstein, eponymous hero of Saul Bellow's newest novel, is not just modeled on Bloom but is Bloom, so to speak, to the life. One or two critics have also noticed that Bellow's final published version is a little toned down from the original proof that was dispatched to reviewers. The subject's homosexuality is still mentioned, and so are some treatments for the AIDS virus, but the connection between the two has been somewhat blurred. For example, D.T. Max, writing in the Sunday magazine of the *New York Times*, noted that the sentence "Abe was taking the common drug prescribed for AIDS" had diminished to "Abe was taking the common drug prescribed for his condition."

I am astonished that nobody has pointed out a much more suggestive bowdlerization by Bellow. In the original, this appeared on the same page as the quotation above:

Even towards the end Ravelstein was still cruising. It turned out that he went to gay bars.

One day he said to me, "Chick, I need a check drawn. It's not a lot. Five hundred bucks."

"Why can't you write it yourself?"

"I want to avoid trouble with Nikki. He'd see it on the check-stub."

"All right. How do you want it drawn?"

"Make it out to Eulace Harms."

"Eulace?"

"That's how the kid spells it. Pronounced Ulysee."

There was no need to ask Ravelstein to explain. Harms was a boy he had brought home one night.... Eulace was the handsome little boy who had wandered about his apartment in the nude...physically so elegant. "No older than sixteen. Very well built"...

I wanted to ask, what did the kid do or offer that was worth five hundred dollars...

Well, of course I would like to know the answer to that, too. (Such questions Chick has!) But the more pressing matter at least for now is—why did Bellow choose to repress the fact that Bloom liked barely legal boys of African-American provenance?

I don't want any grief from anybody about my making that second assumption: I know what Bellow means to convey by "Eulace" with the same certainty that I know what he intends by the name "Harms." And in fact, the now-excised passage followed immediately upon an outburst by Ravelstein, in which he quarrels with his official boyfriend Nikki for saying that a black nurse should be understood as coming "from the ghetto."

MINORITY REPORT

"Ghetto nothing!" Ravelstein said. "Ghetto Jews had highly developed feelings, civilized nerves—thousands of years of training. They had communities and laws. 'Ghetto' is an ignorant newspaper term. It's not a ghetto that they come from, it's a noisy, pointless, nihilistic turmoil."

Bloom, you will recall, devoted much of his famous *Closing of the American Mind* to an attack on black militants on campus in the sixties; he kept up a similar high pitch against the same decade by comparing Woodstock to a Nuremberg rally. And the term "nihilist" is one of the giveaway words by which one can recognize a member or supporter of the school of Leo Strauss, Chicago godfather of the neocons and mentor of Bloom, Fukuyama and many others. So it's of more than passing interest that Bloom should have sought solace on what was to him the wrong side of innumerable tracks.

The Straussian school places homosexuality ("sodomy," as it insists upon terming it) under a rigorous ban. Not only does homosexual practice attack the root of family values but it erodes patriotism and the other manly virtues. Harry Jaffa, who collaborated with Bloom on a book about Shakespeare's politics, later denounced Bloom as a gay proselytizer for the sapping of the American morale. This helps explain why so many conservative intellectuals—who had come to look on Bellow as a fairly reliable ally—have reproached him so bitterly for relating an important truth (or some attenuated part of it) about their departed friend.

It all shows what a long way we still have to travel. Whether you are a creationist like Pat Robertson, or a Catholic like Pat Buchanan, or a materialist believer in "Natural Law" like Jaffa and others, you can't avoid the salient fact that the Creator, or the Divinity, or Nature, or Evolution, has evidently mandated that there be a certain quite large number of homosexuals. The proportion may seem to fluctuate, as do attitudes toward it, which is why the classical and traditional schools have so much trouble with their attitude toward Greek antiquity. But there it is, like a lion in the path of the antihumanists. They cannot, without admitting to the chaos of their worldview, seriously affirm that men and women are simultaneously designed to be sick and commanded to be well. So they take refuge in various confected "laws," and, when these inevitably break down, they resort to simple-minded denial.

Bloom was one of the many living proofs of this contradiction. I didn't care for his bestseller, and I don't like the ethos—partly paranoid and partly self-pitying—that Bellow has lately come to represent. But *Ravelstein*, even in its expurgated form, made me wish that I'd been able to meet Bloom. His other writings, notably *Love and Friendship*, are quite moving even when they are pathetically closeted, because they explore with fascination the endless tension between eros and agape. It would have been instructive to ask him why he himself always sneered at the efforts of other cultural minorities; no less instructive to inquire why his own ideological cohort refused to see that the prefix "homo" denotes not just a form of sex but a form of love. ■

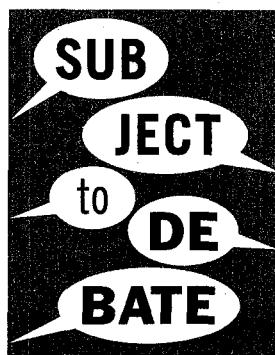
KATHA POLLITT

Dr. Laura, Be Quiet!

Dr. Laura Schlessinger has said a lot of hurtful and irresponsible things on the radio during her many years as a right-wing religious “therapist” and yenta. She mocks and humiliates her callers, some of whom have serious problems. She never misses a chance to bash feminists, working mothers, unmarried or divorced parents, women who have abortions, people who engage in nonmarital sex and anyone who hesitates to whip them through the streets. While she’s not entirely a fraud—like “Dr.” Henry Kissinger she has a PhD, but in the irrelevant field of physiology—when she ventures into therapeutic territory she’s an ignorant meddler. A recent convert to Orthodox Judaism, she hectoring one Jewish mother who had qualms about circumcising her son, insisting that there was “overwhelming medical evidence” of the benefits of circumcision, which is false, and that those who said otherwise were members of hate groups pushing anti-Semitic propaganda. She told another mother, who felt guilty about not including a disruptive autistic child in a special restaurant outing, that it was time to think about placing the child in an institution. Maybe so, but who asked her?

For years groups on the receiving end of Dr. Laura’s tirades and black-and-white judgments about people she’s never met and situations she knows nothing about have grumbled as her show’s ratings soared: With 14.25 million weekly listeners, she’s almost tied with Rush Limbaugh for the nation’s most popular radio personality. Not bad for a woman whose naked photos—product of a youthful preconversion liaison with fellow radio host Bill Ballance—are plastered all over the Web. From time to time, a controversy surfaces: The American Library Association, for example, has strongly objected to her smear campaign against them for their opposition to Internet filtering. But it took gays and lesbians to make a fuss loud enough to make the news, and more power to them, I say. Antigay remarks have long been a Dr. Laura staple—the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) first tried to get a meeting with her in 1997, when she referred to homosexuality as a “biological faux pas”—but recently she’s stepped up her attacks. Homosexuality is “deviant,” a “biological disorder” or “biological error.” Gays are sexual predators who do not deserve rights and should not be left alone with children: “How many letters have I read on the air from gay men who acknowledge that a huge portion of the male homosexual populace is predatory on young boys?” She advocates “reparative” therapy and uses the Family Research Council, Gary Bauer’s outfit, as her main source of information on homosexuality.

With Viacom’s Paramount unit preparing a Dr. Laura daytime TV show for September—more than 160 stations, reaching over 90 percent of the nation’s households, have already signed up—enough was clearly enough. Gays have fought back with letters, ads in *Variety* and the *Hollywood Reporter*, a demonstration at Paramount’s gates and a spiffy website, StopDrLaura.com, which claims 14 million hits. In response, Dr. Laura hired a “crisis management” firm, issued a weaselly “apology”



(“words that I have used in a clinical [!] context have been perceived as judgment”), fired the crisis management team and relabeled the “apology” a “clarification.”

Gay activists want the TV show canceled, which seems unlikely, despite the sympathy of David Lee, producer of Paramount’s *Frasier*, who has said he’s ashamed of his employer. Dr. Laura is not just the most successful woman in radio history (sigh), she’s a multimedia franchise, with more than 3 million copies of her various books in print; her own

foundation, which makes grants to groups that fight abortion and “teen sexuality”; a new magazine called *Dr. Laura Perspective*; and a website crowded with innumerable kitschy and self-promoting tie-ins, from books by others praising her show to teddy-bear tea-sets for children. But the gay protests are at least raising the right question: A major studio would never give a flagrant racist or open anti-Semite his own show, no matter how popular he was—Pat Buchanan, who came close, was always one pole of a debate—so why does Paramount find it more acceptable to promote antigay bigotry?

I used to think focusing on Dr. Laura was a waste of time for feminists. After a week of listening to her mad and prurient diatribes, I think we should take a leaf from gay activism and get busy. When Rush Limbaugh burst onto the national political scene, Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting got right on his case, even publishing a clever paperback, *The Way Things Aren’t*, dismantling his fake statistics and fractured anecdotes. Maybe it’s time for a similar exposé of Dr. Laura, who says women who have abortions are murderers and that mothers always can—and always should—choose not to work, who falsely describes emergency contraception as “dumping out a pregnancy” and causing “disease,” and who urges her callers not to help women leave bad marriages because it’s all their own fault (see Noy Thrupkaew’s article in the May *Sojourner* for a good introduction). Feminist pickets and protests and demands for equal time might not matter to Dr. Laura’s core audience—half lost sheep, half graduates of the Taliban School of Female Deportment—but it would give Paramount another good reason to rethink the show.

New Yorkers can start by joining NOW at noon on May 3, in a demonstration in front of Barnes & Noble at 600 Fifth Avenue, where Dr. Laura will be signing copies of her latest book.

* * *

Great news! With much help from generous *Nation* readers, the Bosnian Initiative Frankfurt, a German human rights group, has succeeded in buying a house to serve as a community center for displaced women and children around Tuzla. If you forgot to send in a check, don’t worry—once again, the BIF is asking for donations for its upcoming summer camp for Bosnian refugee children. \$150 makes you a “godparent” funding two weeks of vacation for one child, but gifts of any size will be warmly appreciated. Checks made out to Bosnian Initiative Frankfurt can be mailed to me at *The Nation*, and I will forward them. ■

ARTICLES



THE NEW STUDENT MOVEMENT

Liza Featherstone

We have the university by the balls," said Nati Passow, a University of Pennsylvania junior, in a meeting with his fellow antisweatshop protesters. "Whatever way we twist them is going to hurt." Passow was one of thirteen Penn students—the group later grew to include forty—occupying the university president's office around the clock in early February to protest the sweatshop conditions under which clothing bearing the U-Penn logo is made. The Penn students, along with hundreds of other members of United Students Against Sweatshops nationwide, were demanding that their university withdraw from the Fair Labor Association (FLA), an industry-backed monitoring group, and instead join the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC), an organization independent of industry influence, founded by students in close cooperation with scholars, activists and workers'-rights organizations in the global South.

At first the administration met the students with barely polite condescension. In one meeting, President Judith Rodin was accompanied by U-Penn professor Larry Gross, an earring-wearing baby boomer well-known on campus for his left-wing views, who urged the protesters to have more faith in the administration and mocked the sit-in strategy, claiming he'd "been there, done that." President Rodin assured them that a task force would review the problem by February 29, and there was no way she could speed

up its decision. She admonished them to "respect the process."

Watching the Penn students negotiate with their university's president, it was clear they didn't believe any of her assurances. They knew there was no reason to trust that the administration would meet one more arbitrary deadline after missing so many others—so they stayed in the office. After eight days of torture by folk-singing, acoustic guitar, recorders, tambourines and ringing cell phones, as well as a flurry of international news coverage, Judith Rodin met the protesters halfway by withdrawing from the FLA. (To students' frustration, the task force decided in early April to postpone a decision about WRC membership until later this spring.)

The most remarkable thing about the Penn students' action was that it wasn't an isolated or spontaneous burst of idealism. Penn's was just the first antisweatshop sit-in of the year; by mid-April students at the universities of Michigan, Wisconsin, Oregon, Iowa and Kentucky, as well as SUNY-Albany, Tulane, Purdue and Macalester, had followed suit. And the sit-in wasn't the protesters' only tactic: Purdue students held an eleven-day hunger strike. Other students chose less somber gestures of dissent. In late February the University of North Carolina's antisweatshop group, Students for Economic Justice, held a nude-optional party titled "I'd Rather Go Naked Than Wear Sweatshop Clothes." In late March, in an exuberant expression of the same principle,

twelve Syracuse students biked across campus nude. The protests were a coordinated effort; members of United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS), which was founded three years ago and now has chapters at more than 200 schools, work closely with one another, a process made easier by the many listservs and websites that the students use to publicize actions, distribute information and help fuel turnout.

Though the largest, most successful—and before Seattle, the most visible—thread of the movement has focused on improving work conditions in the \$2.5 billion collegiate apparel industry, university licensing policies have not been the only targets of recent anticorporate agitation on campus. This year, from UC-Davis to the University of Vermont, students have held globalization teach-ins, planned civil disobedience for the April IMF/World Bank meetings, protested labor policies at the Gap and launched vigorous campaigns to drive Starbucks out of university dining services. In snowy January, at the conservative Virginia Commonwealth University, twenty students slept outside the vice president's office for two nights to protest the university's contract with McDonald's (the school promised the fast-food behemoth a twenty-year monopoly over the Student Commons). Students at Johns Hopkins and at Wesleyan held sit-ins demanding better wages for university workers. And at the end of March hundreds of students, many bearing hideously deformed papier-mâché puppets to illustrate the potential horrors of biotechnology, joined Boston's carnivalesque protest against genetic engineering.

With a *joie de vivre* that the American economic left has probably lacked since before WWI, college students are increasingly engaged in well-organized, thoughtful and morally outraged resistance to corporate power. These activists, more than any student radicals in years, passionately denounce the wealth gap, globally and in the United States, as well as the lack of democratic accountability in a world dominated by corporations. While some attend traditionally political schools like Evergreen, Michigan and Wisconsin, this movement does not revolve around usual suspects; some of this winter's most dramatic actions took place at campuses that have always been conservative, like the University of Pennsylvania, Virginia Commonwealth and Johns Hopkins. At this article's writing in late April, students were staging several significant anticorporate protests every week. It is neither too soon, nor too naïvely optimistic, to call it a movement.

Few of these students resemble—either in appearance or tactics—the hooded anarchist kids who famously threw rocks through Starbucks windows in Seattle last November. They look as if they shop at the Gap (and most of them do). Yet the movement does have an antihierarchical spirit; the Penn antisweat group, for example, made all decisions by consensus. Unlike their anarchist cohort, however, the student anticorporatists have leaders and spokespeople—and most of them agree that if the

movement is to maintain momentum, they will need many more. Fortunately, each major action seems to draw more people in, and new leaders are emerging fast—some students who were on the periphery of the Penn group when I visited the sit-in in early February, for example, have already assumed official leadership positions within the organization.

Much of the struggle concerns the corporatization of higher education. Universities are run increasingly like private firms, and have ever-more intimate relations with private industry [see David L. Kirp, "The New U," April 17]. During one antisweat occupation in mid-April, for example, student activists at the University of Oregon led a campus tour of sites that illustrated the institution's numerous ties to corporations (one stop was the Phil Knight Library, named after Nike's president and CEO). A nationwide student group called 180/Movement for Democracy and Education, based at the University of Wisconsin, articulates this problem, and

its connection to other issues, more consistently than any other group, even leading teach-ins on how World Trade Organization policies affect higher education. But almost all of the current student struggles—whether over tuition increases, apparel licenses, socially responsible investing, McDonald's in the student union, the rights of university laundry workers, a dining-hall contractor's investment in private prisons or solidarity with the striking students in Mexico—focus on the reality of the university as corporate actor.

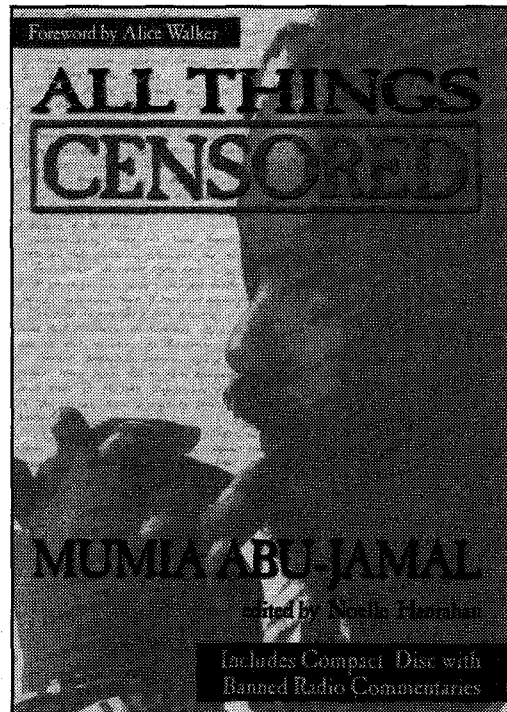
Battle lines are now being drawn on a number of campuses, including Penn and Wisconsin, over whether universities will give in to student demands and agree to join the Worker Rights Consortium. WRC members require their apparel licensees to comply with a strict code of conduct—guaranteeing workers a living wage and the right to organize unions—and mandate full public disclosure of wages, factory locations and working conditions. By denying industry any role in its governance and giving power instead to a board composed of administrators, students and human rights scholars and activists, the WRC provides a nascent model for the kind of university decision-making the students would like to see: a process free of corporate influence. It is also a model in which, so far, student activists have set the terms of discussion. No wonder so many university administrators, many of whom now like to be called "CEOs," have resisted it so savagely, even, in several cases, permitting quite forceful police treatment of peaceful protesters.

Yet many universities that once rebuffed the students' entreaties have since backed down, a testament to the skill and energy of the student organizers. The wave of sit-ins this spring was deliberately timed to precede the WRC's early April founding conference. Before the Penn sit-in, only a handful of institutions, none of which had substantial apparel-licensing contracts, belonged to the new organization; now forty-seven institutions belong, and the WRC founding meeting was attended by students or administrators from forty schools. The night before the meeting, the entire ten-school University of California system joined the organization and sent a representative to New York for the event. Some

Liza Featherstone is a freelance journalist based in Brooklyn. This article is part of the Haywood Burns Community Activist Journalism series.

When Abu-Jamal is censored,
everyone's civil rights are threatened.
Let freedom ring; let Abu-Jamal speak.

—BOOKLIST (starred review)



ALL THINGS CENSORED

by Mumia Abu-Jamal

Edited by Noelle Hanrahan

Foreword by Alice Walker

Seventy-nine essays—many freshly composed by Mumia with the cartridge of a ball-point pen, the only implement he is allowed in his death row cell—embody the calm and powerful words of humanity spoken by a man on death row. Mumia's composure, humor, and connection to the living world around him represent an irrefutable victory over the "corrections" system that has for two decades sought to isolate and silence him.

The accompanying CD, a compilation of Mumia's best recordings to date, includes previously unreleased material and features comments from other writers, luminaries, and activists, including Assata Shakur, Martin Sheen, Alice Walker, Cornel West, John Edgar Wideman, and others.

Available at bookstores everywhere, or direct
from Seven Stories Press at (800) 596-7437

www.sevenstories.com &

www.sevenstories.com/mumia.htm



institutions joined without any building takeovers, choosing to avert bad publicity through graceful capitulation. "A lot of them joined without a sit-in because they thought there would be a sit-in the next day," says Maria Roeper, an antisweat activist taking a semester off from Haverford to coordinate the WRC.

Indeed, student activists have managed to put administrators on the defensive. On April 7 student antisweat protesters wearing duct tape over their mouths—to protest the fact that students have no say in campus decisions—met the University of Oregon president at the airport, frightening him so badly he left the baggage claim and hid in the bathroom. Even more striking, that same day, was the sight of dozens of suited university administrators at the WRC conference scurrying to "organize" among themselves. Many were pressured into WRC membership and worry that they won't have as much influence as they want over the new monitoring organization. Administrators were supposed to elect their representatives to the governing board at the founding meeting, but instead they asked for more time; they are now expected to do so later this spring, after holding their own meeting in Chicago. "It's only natural that they should want to do that," says Roeper. "The student group [USAS] did have a lot of power."

Industry, too, is getting nervous. Top officials of the Fair Labor Association, founded in 1996 by the Clinton Administration along with business representatives and some human rights groups, have been touring campuses, trying to convince students of their organization's good intentions. (Unlike the WRC, the FLA allows industry to choose its own monitors and doesn't include provisions for a living wage.) A week before the consortium's founding con-

ference, Nike, which supports the FLA, canceled its contract with Brown University, objecting to the university's WRC membership. Nike has repeatedly denounced the WRC, calling it a "gotcha" monitoring system. "Nike is using Brown to threaten other schools," said Brown antisweat activist Nicholas Reville at the conference. More recently, Nike's Phil Knight, who had pledged \$30 million to the University of Oregon for its sports stadium, indignantly withdrew the offer after the school announced its membership in the WRC.

In the recent history of student activism, the new emphasis on economics represents quite a shift. Ten years ago, there was plenty of student organizing, but it was fragmentary and sporadic, and most of it focused on what some, mostly its detractors, liked to call "identity politics," fighting the oppression of racial and sexual minorities, and of women. Admirable as they were—and effective in improving social relations on many campuses—there was little sense of solidarity among these groups, and they often seemed insular, bearing little relation to life outside the university.

That political moment is over, partly because in the larger world, organized feminism is in a lull and the mainstream gay movement now focuses on issues like inclusion in the military, gay marriage and hate-crimes legislation—moderate goals that don't speak to student idealism. By contrast, the economic left—especially the labor movement, and the burgeoning resistance to global capital—is enjoying a resurgence, both in numbers and in vision. The new student anticorporatists are building strong relationships with unions, which are, in turn, showing remarkable dedication to the new generation. During February's Penn sit-in,

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a different union local brought the students dinner almost every night. "Seattle helped the unions see that the students were serious," explains Simon Greer, Jobs With Justice's Workers' Rights board director. When the University of Wisconsin sent in the cops to drag away fifty-four peaceful antisweat protesters, George Becker, president of the United Steelworkers, issued a statement denouncing the administration's "oppressive actions."

The early-nineties struggles haven't vanished without a trace; indeed, it sometimes seems as if, through the anticorporate movement, they have returned to their early-seventies roots as movements for radical liberation. Many of the leaders are women, and feminist analysis informs the movement's focus; the antisweat activists, for instance, frequently point out that most sweatshop workers are women. And although the struggle against homophobia has largely disappeared from the student progressive agenda, the tactics—militant, theatrical and often campy direct action—of early-nineties groups like ACT UP and Queer Nation have clearly influenced the new crew of student activists.

Anticorporatism also has the potential to be a movement for racial justice. Farah Mongeau, a University of Michigan law student and member of U-M's Students of Color Coalition (SCC), points out, "[Sweatshop labor] obviously affects people of color. People of color are the ones who work in the sweatshops." Yet, although many core organizers are South Asian, the antisweatshop movement is mostly white. Organizing by students of color is on the upswing, but its relationship to the anticorporate groups can be uneasy. Some students of color say this is partly because white activists receive better treatment from those in power. At Michigan in February, SCC members protesting a racist secret society held a sit-in at the same time as the antisweat organization and resented the fact that while they were ignored for weeks, the predominantly white group got a meeting with the president immediately. Likewise, Justin Higgins, sophomore class president at North Carolina Central University, a historically black and working-class college, who in February had just joined the regional student anti-WTO/IMF coalition, said he wasn't planning to go to Washington, DC, and wasn't sorry to have missed Seattle. "If there had been black students [in Seattle]," Higgins said, "there would have been real bullets, not rubber bullets."

On the other hand, some less visible economic-justice campaigns on campus have been more racially mixed: those fighting university tuition hikes, for instance. And the student movement's relationship with labor may help break down its whiteness. In its early stages, very few black students were involved in the Johns Hopkins action demanding higher wages for university workers, for example, though the low-wage workers at the school are predominantly people of color. But when local unions got involved in the sit-in, they were able to recruit members of the black student group. On other campuses, multiracial alliances between anticorporate and prison activists are beginning to emerge (see "Hip-Hop Politics on Campus," page 16, on the role of hip-hop music in this coalition). In early April students at ten campuses launched a boycott campaign against Sodexo-Marriott, which operates more than 500 campus dining halls, is the largest investor in US private prisons and is also currently facing censure from the National Labor Relations Board. In an April sit-in at SUNY-Albany, activists, in addition to sweatshop-related demands, insisted that the university drop Sodexo-

Marriott if the company did not divest from private prisons and improve its labor practices.

Part of the problem with early-to-mid-nineties student "identity politics" was an obsession with representation—only queers could talk about homophobia, only people of color could talk about racism—which seriously limited its constituency. Such first-person politics also restricted diverse activists' ability to work together and find common ground. Yet its premise—drawn from seventies feminism—that the personal is political laid the founda-

Sweating It Out

A wave of anticorporate protests hit college campuses this spring. Here are ten recent actions.

★ **University of Michigan** antisweatshop activists occupied a dean's office for two days in February. The occupation, which grew to include forty students, forced the administration to conditionally join the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC), which advocates a tough code of corporate conduct, instead of the Fair Labor Association, a business-backed monitoring group.

★ More than seventy students occupied the **University of Wisconsin** administration building in February, demanding that their school join the WRC. After four days, fifty cops arrived, clad in full riot gear, arresting fifty-four protesters.

★ In February twenty **Johns Hopkins** students, protesting the poverty-level wages of university laundry workers, occupied the university administration building for seventeen days. Administrators refused to adopt a living-wage policy but did agree to negotiate a series of wage increases.

★ In late March six **Purdue** students, demanding that their university join the WRC, went on a hunger strike. The strike lasted for eleven days and did not force the university to enlist in the WRC, but did secure a code of conduct.

★ Some thirty-five students occupied **Wesleyan's** admissions office in early April, demanding better wages and benefits for the school's janitors. After a thirty-three-hour occupation, Wesleyan's president submitted to the protesters' demands.

★ Calling on the **University of Iowa** to embrace the WRC, more than thirty students and community activists occupied the administration building for six days in April, until police forcibly removed the protesters, arresting five of them.

★ In another WRC-related protest in early April, eighteen students took over the basement of the **University of Kentucky's** administration building, fourteen of them locked down with chains and bike locks. After an eight-hour sit-in, thirteen students were arrested.

★ In April **SUNY-Albany** students occupied the president's office, demanding that the university join the WRC and drop its food-service provider, Sodexo-Marriott. (Students criticized the company for unionbusting and investing in private prisons.) After less than a day, seventeen students were arrested.

★ Students at **Syracuse** slept outside on the quad for a week in unexpectedly snowy mid-April, demanding that their university join the WRC.

★ On April 16 and 17 thousands of students turned out to protest—many by engaging in direct action—at the IMF/World Bank meetings in Washington, DC.

—L.F.

tion for one of the core assumptions of the current anticorporate movement, which is that because we are consumers, we are personally implicated in the depredations of capital. In the antisweat movement, students initially got involved because they were horrified to find out about the exploitation behind products that were a part of their everyday lives. Says Penn sophomore and USAS member Roopa Gona, "We're talking about *our* clothes." Student public-education campaigns about Starbucks—which, in mid-April, was pressured into buying Fair Trade Coffee—and genetically modified food also focus on buying power. The consumer experience is one that everyone has in common, rather than one that emphasizes power differences among students.

Exposing the sweatshop horror behind ubiquitous logos is subversive, especially in a culture completely hypnotized by them. The whole purpose of logos and brands is commodity fetishism; we are supposed to crave them but not question the conditions under which they were made. But, as Naomi Klein observes in her new book, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*, companies trafficking in image are particularly vulnerable when those images are tarnished. Obscure information-technology companies can quietly outsource their data-entry work to Mexican sweatshops,

but companies like Disney, Starbucks and the Gap are different: Their prominence in consumers' hearts and minds makes it far easier for activists to publicize their wrongdoings. Like other contemporary anticorporatists—those vandalizing and protesting under Golden Arches worldwide, for instance—students have expertly used big capital's catchy logos against it. And just like the Nike swoosh, "we can think of the university itself as a brand, a logo, that students consume," says veteran antisweat activist and University of North Carolina junior Todd Pugatch. Universities, especially prestigious ones or those with high-profile sports teams, depend on image, too. The recognizability of the University of Michigan's big yellow M, like that of McDonald's, can backfire if the logo comes to symbolize exploitation and corporate greed.

Still, brand targeting has limits. One of the ways in which contemporary capitalism maintains its hold on us is by defining everyone as consumers—rather than, say, citizens, workers or activists. A crucial problem for the anticorporate movement is how to appeal to a wider public without reducing politics to shopping. And students are realizing that simply as indignant shoppers, they can't be very effective. Boycotts in the apparel industry are futile because all major clothing companies use sweatshop labor, ex-

Hip-Hop Politics on Campus

"You have no idea how much love I got for this," says David Jamil Muhammad, referring to his role as a student organizer of "Hip-Hop Generation—Hip-Hop as a Movement." The conference was held April 14–16 at the University of Wisconsin and brought together activists, scholars and entertainers to examine hip-hop as a force for social change. Muhammad's interest in music has drawn him into the campus antisweatshop movement: "When I found out that some hip-hop gear was being made in prisons, I was furious." Muhammad later teamed up with a broad range of students, including some of the key organizers of the successful antisweatshop campaign at the university, to put together the event, which featured hip-hop trailblazers Afrika Bambaataa and Chuck D of Public Enemy.

Forging multiracial, multi-issue coalitions continues to be a daunting task for student organizers, including Muhammad, who feels that "white paternalism" has been a major disincentive for students of color to become involved in progressive causes on college campuses. But according to professor Craig Werner, a faculty liaison to the UW conference, today's student activists are "smarter" than those in the recent past: "During the eighties, all too often, the white left was willing to pursue ideological purity at the expense of ground-level realities of what things meant for black students. Interracial coalitions became very, very difficult. It is much better now.... For a change, we've got the feminists, the Nation of Islam and the lefties all working together. And lord knows, we need it."

While Rudy Giuliani's ongoing police assault on black men in New York City and the alarming victory of Proposition 21 at the California ballot box have provided obvious targets for hip-hop-related political protests [see Robin Templeton, "California Youth Take Initiative," March 13], much of the activism on college campuses is tied to a wider economic picture. Take, for example,

the Prison Moratorium Project's "No More Prisons" hip-hop tour, which is designed to recruit and train prison activists. "We're linking the sweatshop issue, private-prison investments and the treatment of workers on campus," says PMP's Kevin Pranis. Sodexo-Marriott Services, a major investor in the private-prison industry and a focal point of the No More Prisons tour, managed to prevent a No More Prisons pretour event from taking place on February 15 at American University in Washington, DC, because the company operates the venue where the event was supposed to be held. But the forty-city "raptivist" tour will be hitting college campuses and other locations over the next few months, with political visions delineated on the recent *No More Prisons* CD, a benefit compilation featuring hip-hop luminaries Dead Prez, The Coup and others, many of whom will be performing on the tour.

Hip-hop music has a more diverse audience—racially and economically—than any other popular genre, and some campus organizers are finding that it can help to provide a common ground on which to unify disparate groups. Oberlin College senior Mie Anton, one of the coordinators of "Six Million Ways to Speak: Oberlin Community Hip-Hop Conference 2000" (April 20–23), says, "When you look at our committee, there are so many different types of people from everywhere in the world. You realize that hip-hop has taken itself to a different level. Especially with our generation, we really grew up with it." At the University of Wisconsin, student organizer David Muhammad reflects on the purpose of his school's hip-hop forum: "We need jobs in urban America.... The poor whites of this nation need jobs. Let's talk about the global economy."

JOHNNY TEMPLE

Johnny Temple plays bass guitar in the New York noise-rock band Girls Against Boys and is co-founder of Akashic Books (www.akashicbooks.com). He lives in Brooklyn.

WHAT THE MEDIA ISN'T TELLING YOU

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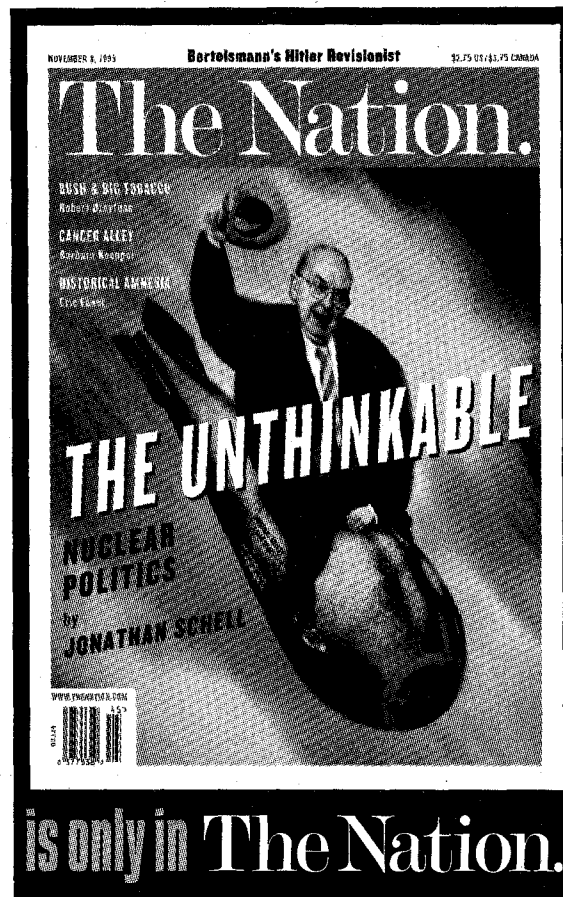
As columnist Katha Pollitt wrote, "the right-wing attack on the National Endowment for the Arts is playing to a small, if ferocious, constituency. Contrary to stereotype, Americans *like* the arts, and the more access they have to them, the more they like them."

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plains Laurie Eichenbaum, a Penn senior and USAS organizer who was wearing a red Old Navy fleece when I met her: "There is no good alternative." Saurav Sarkar, of Yale Students Against Sweatshops, says, "That's the most common misperception about us. People say, 'Oh, I don't want to stop buying clothes at the Gap.'" Crucial to the anticorporate movement's gradual evolution beyond consumer consciousness and toward labor solidarity and broad structural change, as UNC's Pugatch observes, will be its relationship with workers, in the US labor movement as well as in the global South. If the WRC develops as the students hope, it will help give workers and unions a stronger voice in the apparel industry, rather than simply conferring a *Good Housekeeping*-style seal of approval on "sweat-free" brands.

Despite this emerging vision, not all students come to anti-corporate activism with a radical outlook. "People are drawn in by the horror stories," says Maria Roeper, but then they start seeing how the whole system works. Students are also radicalized by their university's intransigence and by the realization that institutions only change when they're forced to do so. David Corson-Knowles, a Yale freshman and spokesperson for the Student Alliance to Reform Corporations (STARC), a national group

founded at Yale, says he thinks his group will eventually convince the Yale Corporation—which has the CEO of Procter & Gamble on its board—to invest responsibly "because we're right." But in a group discussion in a coffee shop near campus, it's clear that students from the Student/Labor Action Coalition (SLAC) and the Yale chapter of United Students Against Sweatshops—older groups that have been struggling with the administration for longer and use more confrontational tactics—beg to differ. Yale SLAC activist Laurie Kimmington, a senior, says of the university's administrators, "They want to do nothing, as much as possible." Danielle Linzer, a Penn sophomore and STARC leader, admitted this might be the case. STARC, she acknowledged, had a "more conservative approach to reform" than United Students Against Sweatshops, but, she said, "we're a newer group, so we haven't yet been stalled the way they have."

All in all, it's impossible not to feel at least cautiously optimistic about this new movement. "We are training an entire generation to think differently about"—pause—"capitalism," says Kimmington. She glances at my notebook and at the STARC activists across the cafe table and giggles cheerfully. "Oops, maybe I shouldn't say that." ■

THE US IMAGE WE STILL SEE—RUEFULLY, USEFULLY—IS THAT OF A FAILED IMPERIAL POWER.

Vietnam: A Cracked Mirror

PETER DAVIS

Imagine yourself a Vietnamese veteran of the National Liberation Front or the North Vietnamese Army. Imbued with hopes of independence and the anti-imperialist ideal, you lost a leg in the war. But your side did win. You look around you now, and you see Coca-Cola and Exxon all over your country, and you will shortly see a US warship making a guest appearance in Cam Ranh Bay. You might be forgiven if you think to yourself, I lost my leg, and they cut that deal anyway. What was this about?

Meanwhile, have a look at your former enemy.

If the first casualty of war is truth, the last is memory. Twenty-five years after our helicopters retreated from the roof of the US Embassy in Saigon on April 30, 1975, almost 100 million of us—more than one-third of our population—cannot remember the American loss in Vietnam because we weren't even born until the war was over. For many of the rest of us, memory is contaminated; our attitudes and anger hardened long ago like fists, and we have never unclenched them. In the imperial dream and anti-Communist nightmare that gripped America after World War II, what we did in Vietnam was lose 58,000



dead, while the Vietnamese, North and South, were losing thirty times that number. A rampage, by any measurement. But what did our deeds in turn do to us?

We can argue, left against right or within the left as within the right, about whether we learned well from Vietnam or failed to take the lesson, but no one doubts that our first lost war changed attitudes toward our own country and its leadership. Even before the war had quite ended, we turtled into ourselves and unpre-

cedentedly threw out the last President, in midterm, who had led us to defeat. The book *No More Vietnams* was written, tellingly, not by Marcus Raskin or Noam Chomsky but by Richard Nixon.

The war exploded the myth that because we elect a government it will tell us the truth. What remembering citizen has ever completely believed a President since Lyndon Johnson assured us almost nightly that we were winning in Vietnam? The myth of American invulnerability and perseverance (or, as it used to be known, "stick-to-it-iveness") was likewise a war casualty. We could and did lose; we could and did quit. We saw the limits of power, the failure of intervention, the strategic uselessness—not to mention cruelty—of bombing a country that doesn't want us there, hitting it with more tonnage than had been dropped in all previous wars, not because the country threatened us but simply because we did not agree with its government. We learned the contradiction in a policy that was willing to destroy a country in

Peter Davis is a writer and filmmaker living in Castine, Maine. He directed Hearts and Minds, a film about Vietnam for which he received an Academy Award. His most recent book is If You Came This Way: A Journey Through the Lives of the Underclass (John Wiley).

order to "save" it, as an American officer casually claimed he was doing when he leveled a village one day. We could and did destroy an economy and much of a countryside and still have to slink out of town, our choppers bringing up the rear.

Even now, haunted by Vietnam, we have not decided the meaning of the war. For boomers, whether they were actually there or not, it was the Big Event, as World War II was for children of the Depression. What the war meant changes with your perspective. Was the war a crime (radicals), a mistake (liberals), a mistake not to win (conservatives), a crime not to win (hard right)?

As a result of losing, we had little choice but to see ourselves in the bright light of imperialists whose imperialism had failed. "The worst thing that could happen to our country," Mary McCarthy wrote in 1967, "would be to win this war." In the decade before Vietnam, the United States had mounted successful, brutal, relatively secret, low-cost operations to overthrow governments in Iran, Guatemala and the newly independent Congo. If there had been no Vietnam, who can doubt we'd have tried to conquer and garrison Nicaragua in the eighties (instead of "only" illegally funding an incompetent insurgency); completed the conquest and subsequent occupation of Iraq, intervened in Iran and parts of Africa in the nineties; or that instead of tip-toeing we'd be swarming all over the Balkans and Colombia in the 2000s?

Ironically, the war in Vietnam, far from limiting the Communist "threat," which was our stated policy objective, may have helped keep it alive. And where would our domestic right wing have been without international Communism to demonize?

Just where they are now, probably, locked into bedroom issues and making sure our under and upper classes remain entrenched. The right would have arrived sooner at these stations, though, and by now might have moved on, even switched to embracing gun control, in the form of weapons registration, as a means of protecting property from armed have-nots. (It may not happen on Charlton Heston's watch, but trust me, this will come to pass.) The right wing's interventionist adventures, had we won in Vietnam, would have produced their own unknown fallout on the Soviet side. Fear and hostility might even have been sufficient to shore up the solidarity of the USSR and Eastern Europe.

The American left was at least as affected by the war as the right. If there had been no Vietnam, the left might never have learned the power of a peace crusade. Civil rights was well under way before the war, but it was Martin Luther King Jr. himself who united the two causes of peace and racial reconciliation, with each drawing strength from the other. Feminism, gay and lesbian rights, and other sequel movements were able to coalesce around the antiwar campaign. The left also learned it had the power to say no—as well as to say NOW. The famous desertion of LBJ by the so-called Wise Men may have done more than any single act by the peace movement to convince the establishment it wouldn't win the war, but the Wise Men had children and grandchildren in the streets, and the noise reached the upper floors.

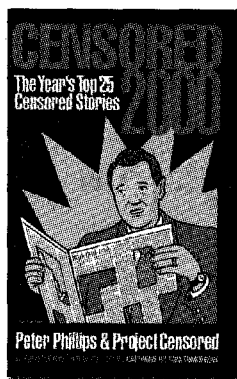
Defeat has had its uses, as well, in provoking a re-examination of war as an instrument of policy, a re-examination that could not have occurred after victory in World War II, which was far more devastating to far more people over a far greater area. World War II led to the United Nations and a resolve for peace,

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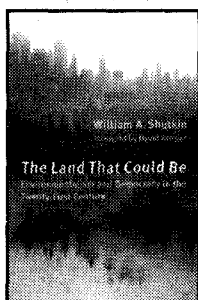


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but its good-versus-evil climate did not lead to what today is frequently concluded by the young. They may not know the specifics of one conflict from another, but they have a seemingly innate skepticism about war. On some campuses it is taken as a given that war is caused by elites acting in what they take to be their own interests, institutional violence promulgated by ruling groups for personal gain. Our upper classes generally had an easy time avoiding service in Vietnam; yet a blue-collar war led to blue-collar conclusions, diffusing eventually through all classes, about the purpose of war.

We are not a people given to shame. Not only our winner's sensibility but our sunny view of inevitable progress has fenced us off from feelings of regret or remorse. Germany, darker and less optimistic about history in general, has been able to express far more shame—backed with at least some cash reparations—over the Holocaust, which with all its horror lasted only a few years, than the United States has done in the almost century and a half since the end of slavery, which itself endured for more than two centuries. While we may look sheepishly now and then at Native Americans, a nation of immigrants has not sliced its victory over the original inhabitants into even one part guilt to ten parts pride. But Vietnam at last shamed us. We endure different shames. Shame on the left has been over not doing even more to end the war, over our country doing what it did in Vietnam; the right's shame seems to be that we didn't stay the course, that we didn't win, that we turned tail. Still, it is shame, and shame has its consequences. Can anyone picture a draft dodger becoming President after World War II?

John McCain traded shamelessly on this shame. Here was an angry loose cannon if ever one slid around the deck of public opinion. He was shot down while bombing North Vietnam, spent four years in prison during which he gave a modified apology under duress (but *any* apology during World War II would quite possibly have disqualified a POW for honorable discharge, not to mention high public office), then recovered to help lead a diplomatic rapprochement with Vietnam two decades later. Brashly, he went on to play the sympathy card for more than it was worth in presidential politics. McCain was both an expression of and an antidote to shame. His candidacy was in its way the sentimental response of old-fashioned patriotism to Bill Clinton; replace a draft dodger with a POW, which is the best we can come up with out of Vietnam in terms of, sort of, heroism.

As an individual, I found the uses of defeat somewhat surprising. With an upbringing that included not one or two but actually three loving parents (mother, father, stepmother) who were Communists, I had always kind of figured there would one day be an evolution, if not revolution, toward socialism in our country. I had also figured that Communism as it developed in other countries was harsh and repressive mostly because of the history of those countries and because of our own implacable and menacing opposition to it. I should have known earlier, of course, but it was only after our loss in Vietnam—in other words, the triumph of its revolution—and subsequent political developments there, that I understood the right was right about one big thing: the institutionalized absence of personal freedom in a Communist state. Calling freedom bourgeois is like calling ice cream fattening; you're going to want it anyway. Regardless of Marxist

economic aims, Communism has never been about freedom. This was hardly fresh news, but for the old as well as new left the conclusion was as inescapable as it was paradoxical that Communism killed socialism for a generation. I also realized after Vietnam, and after the clear evidence that our defeat did not lead to the sky falling (never mind dominoes), that there never was a threat to American democracy or capitalism, much less power, from either domestic or international Communism. I had once thought, and sometimes even hoped, that there was, but there was not, and Vietnam proved that.

But nothing else Vietnam did or did not do was as crucial as the mirror it held up to all of us. Surely it changed the way we saw our national selves. Innocence is a strange word to use about Goliath prior to his encounter with David; it may, however, fit American attitudes toward the world before Vietnam. We were so sure our way was better than anyone else's, that our civilization was the template for humanity, that our might was always right, so sure we couldn't lose, that our very naïveté constituted a form of innocence. Vietnam repealed World War II assumptions of

inherent virtue. Even our triumphalist boasting during the market boom is principally economic rather than moral and political. In the mirror Vietnam provided us, we have never again been so sure about ourselves or our formerly wondrous ways.

Let us return to the Vietnamese veteran who lost his leg in the war. Imagine he has changed nationalities and is now a Vietnam veteran, one of ours. He looks down to where his leg once was, glances up at his television set showing him the rain, and reign, of American products in Vietnam and the coming visit of the US Navy to what was perhaps his old base at Cam Ranh Bay. Peace makes strange bedfellows. The Vietnamese had to throw us out, had to decolonize, before they could be recolonized; had to find their independence before they could bring back the Western economies and aspire to become Vietnam Inc. Vietnamese Communists are business partners with American corporations. I lost my leg, our vet may be thinking, and they cut that deal anyway. Can we blame him if he wonders, What was this about? ■

Letter From South Carolina

by Ron Nixon

The tourist season is now open here in South Carolina's low-country. In Charleston and nearby resort areas like Hilton Head, everyone from local artists to hotel owners has been gearing up for the visitors who provide the lifeblood of the area as they enjoy the golden beaches and pay \$150 to play eighteen holes on well-manicured golf courses. But this year there is a sense of dread on the part of business and state tourism officials.

On January 17, the NAACP, with the aid of an estimated 50,000 marchers, held a rally to kick off a nationwide boycott of South Carolina in an effort to remove what it calls a sign of hate and bigotry: the Confederate battle flag that flies atop the state Capitol. In response, several conventions and sports events have been canceled, along with a performance by the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company at Charleston's Spoleto festival. The New York Knicks basketball team said it would not hold its playoff training camp in the city this year, and tennis star Serena Williams withdrew from the Family Circle tennis cup in Hilton Head.

Recently, the South Carolina State Senate voted to remove the flag from the Capitol and place it on the Statehouse grounds, a move described by State Senator Glenn McConnell, one of its most ardent supporters, as an "olive branch." But many flag opponents see the proposed move not only as insufficient—the flag would, if anything, be more prominent in the new setting—but also as an attempt to isolate the NAACP from the coalition of businesses, colleges, legislators and others calling for the flag's removal. Meanwhile, flag supporters in the South Carolina

Ron Nixon is an investigative reporter in Virginia. Research assistance was provided by the Investigative Fund of the Nation Institute.

House, which will vote on the Senate bill shortly, say they will not support removing the flag, while opponents reject the "olive branch" measure as unpalatable. "It's our job to make sure that any compromise is acceptable to people who look like me," said Gilda Cobb-Hunter, House minority leader and member of the legislative black caucus. The NAACP, for its part, says the flag should be put in a museum or a glass case in the Statehouse—to be seen as history rather than a sign of sovereignty—and has vowed to extend the boycott.

South Carolina's flag-removal campaign echoes efforts across the region that have been spurred by changing demographics, the increased power of black legislators and the eagerness of state officials to attract high-tech companies and foreign capital. The leaders of the pro-Confederate movement say they fear that the flag's removal will have a domino effect, and, indeed, those who want to see the flag removed are hoping for exactly that. "It's like the civil rights movement. Once we win in South Carolina, we move to Georgia," said Georgia State Representative Tyrone Brooks. "Once we win in Georgia, it's on to Mississippi and beyond."

Ever since Gen. Robert E. Lee's surrender, many in the old Confederacy have worked to turn military defeat into a cultural and social victory. Organizations honoring the Confederacy sprang up and spread like wildfire; Confederate generals and former slaveowners became freedom fighters, honored with statues and with their names on schools and streets. Much later, in the 1950s and '60s, Confederate battle flags were hoisted over state buildings as part of the massive resistance to federal civil rights legislation and court rulings.

For the descendants of slaves, however, the symbols are linked



to Klansmen, potbellied Southern sheriffs and Jim Crow. And with the success of the civil rights movement and growing black economic and political power, pressure for change has grown. Two years ago twenty-two schools in New Orleans whose names honored slaveowners and Confederate generals underwent name changes. In Atlanta, Georgia's Fulton County, all but one high school have taken down the state flag, which has a Confederate emblem woven into it, and now fly only the US flag. The De Kalb County Jail removed the current state flag two years ago and now flies an earlier version of the flag that doesn't contain the Confederate symbol. Earlier this year, the city of Jackson, Mississippi, decided to stop displaying the flag, which also contains the Confederate symbol, in the City Council chambers. In Alabama the Confederate flag, placed on the Capitol dome by George Wallace in defiance of the civil rights movement, came down in 1993 when a judge ruled that the state had no authority to fly it over a building. Further litigation followed, but after the flag was removed during a renovation of the Capitol, it was never returned.

In 1997 Virginia state legislators eliminated the state song because of its reference to blacks as "darkies." City officials in Richmond, the state capital, have renamed several streets that bore the names of Confederate generals to honor local civil rights activists. The state's Department of Motor Vehicles refused to let the Sons of Confederate Veterans have license plates with the Confederate flag. (The group sued, and the lawsuit is still pending.) The biggest battle in the state has come over legislation proposed

by Republican Governor Jim Gilmore, and recently signed into law, to give Martin Luther King Jr. a holiday of his own instead of having to share it with two Civil War generals. In March the Chesterfield County NAACP—inspired, it said, by the South Carolina action—boycotted several malls because of the county's decision to recognize April as Confederate history month. The group later called off the boycott after county officials promised to work to improve race relations. The county was also embarrassed by the fact that former Klan leader David Duke showed up and urged whites to shop with him at the malls.

But the battle is far from over. In Georgia black lawmakers have unsuccessfully introduced bills for more than a decade that would restore the state flag to its pre-1956, pre-Confederate configuration. Black legislators in Mississippi have gone so far as to sue the state to have the state flag removed. The lawsuit was dismissed but reinstated last year by the State Supreme Court; it's still pending. And flag supporters have managed to exert their own political pressure. After former Georgia Governor Zell Miller called for removing the flag—a move supported by business groups, former President Jimmy Carter and then-Congressman Newt Gingrich—not only was the effort unsuccessful but Miller barely won a tough re-election battle, after which he abandoned the flag fight. Bills in both states have stalled, with black legislators unable to muster enough support from their white counterparts to support legislation.

The most important factor the South Carolina battle has in its

The Color of Sprawl

One of Joe Neal's most vivid memories dates from 1956, when he was 5. "That's when a neighboring house got the first indoor toilet in our community," says Neal, who now represents the southern sector of Richland County in the South Carolina House of Representatives. Neal, 49, is a black Baptist minister and a member of one of hundreds of families fighting what's known as the county's "2020 Town and Country Vision" plan.

The county says the plan, which designates almost all of Lower Richland as a "preservation area," will help cope with urban sprawl. High-tech plants already line Interstate 77, which links Columbia, the state capital, with Charlotte, North Carolina, to the north. But Lower Richland residents see the plan as a disguised effort to obtain their land cheaply and then turn it into a continuation of the high-tech corridor. About 80 percent of the 50,000 residents are African-Americans, the majority in low-income farm families. "Today we're land-rich and cash-poor, so the County Council appears to be making a county land-grab in the name of environmental protection," Neal says.

The plan, which was approved a year ago, defines "preservation area" as any prime agricultural land, mature forest land or land on or containing a waterway or pond. Restrictions on such land include a prohibition on the cutting of trees, currently Lower Richland's main crop. There are no provisions for payments to those affected, and many residents, unable to survive, will have to sell their land at low prices and depart. Developers—or so the suspicion, as yet unsubstantiated, goes—will buy the land, use their connections to get the plan's restrictions waived and then build high-tech plants and housing subdivisions.

Susan Brill, a County Council member who supports the plan, says its intent is purely to preserve open space. "This is a hot spot for urban sprawl; we don't want people to exploit our state," she says. Asked about the impact on blacks in Lower Richland, she says, "They need not be afraid." But Lisa Rutstrom, a University of South Carolina economics professor who heads the state ACLU, calls the plan a "horrendous theft from people who already are victims in our society" as well as a violation of the US Constitution's prohibition on the taking of property without due process and just compensation. Both the ACLU and the NAACP are considering federal lawsuits.

A lawsuit already filed by William McClanahan, a white property owner, claims the County Council has violated state rules of procedure and has never held the public hearing required by law. The suit also notes what it characterizes as a conflict of interest involving council chairwoman Kit Smith, whose husband is the regional president of the Bank of America. The "Vision" plan was based in part on a study commissioned by the Palmetto Conservation Foundation, which is heavily funded by the bank. The bank is also the source of many developers' funding. Smith denies any conflict. Sam Misenheimer, manager of county planning services, said, "There is no conflict of interest, based on a determination of the legal department."

WILLIAM STEIF

William Steif, who worked as a reporter and editor for Scripps Howard Newspapers for thirty-six years, moved to South Carolina in 1998.

favor is that it's being waged around economics rather than politics or through the courts. Tourism pumps an estimated \$14 billion a year into the state's economy and creates 250,000 jobs. "We've seen how hard it is trying to get something past these good ol' boys in most Southern legislatures," said Earl Shinhoster, former acting president of the national NAACP and now the group's coordinator for voter empowerment. "When you hit them in the pocket they have to sit up and listen."

Another factor is that the boycott has spawned a coalition of civil rights and community groups, colleges, businesses, black legislators and Democratic Party leaders. Lou Holtz, a national championship football coach at Notre Dame who is now at the University of South Carolina, has joined the chorus of those who want the flag removed, as has the board of the Citadel, a formerly all-male military school that fought federal efforts to admit women, and the board of the University of South Carolina. Charleston Mayor Joseph Riley led a 120-mile walk to Columbia in early April to demonstrate his belief that the flag must come down. Business leaders have lobbied hard, too. International companies have invested more than \$8 billion in the state since 1995, creating 24,797 jobs, according to the state's Department of Commerce annual report. Only Hawaii has a higher percentage of its citizens working for international companies, according to the US Department of Commerce.

NAACP officials say they know the business community and others are not concerned so much with the feelings of African-Americans as they are with the state's reputation, but that they'll take whatever help they can get. "Everyone understands the color of green," said Cobb-Hunter, the House minority leader. During his successful campaign, Governor Jim Hodges said he did not intend to have the flag become an issue. But Hodges, who beat Republican Governor David Beasley with the help of a heavy black turnout, now says that the international attention paid to South Carolina has made it unavoidable.

The flag debate also figured prominently in this year's presidential primaries. On the Democratic side, Vice President Al Gore and former US Senator Bill Bradley both said it should come down; on the Republican side, Texas Governor George W. Bush said it should be left up to the state to decide, while Arizona US Senator John McCain, after first calling the flag a "symbol of racism" reversed himself and called it a "symbol of heritage." Recently, McCain said the state should remove the flag and that he should have said so during the campaign.

Polls clearly show that a majority of South Carolinians are behind bringing down the flag, but a small core of pro-flag legislators and groups have dug in. Before the NAACP's rally and march in January, about 6,000 people, many in Confederate uniforms and whistling "Dixie," marched to the state Capitol and promised a fight to the end. More recently, flag supporter Nelson Waller told a rally of about 100 people in Anderson that "We are the victims of the modern-day witch hunt in this affair." Said Lake High, of Columbia, referring to the NAACP, "They hate you because you're Southern, Christian and conservative. They hate you because you threaten them politically." A few flag supporters showed up at the

rally with swastika tattoos, but leaders asked them to cover up.

The rally was indicative of the way Confederate groups have tried to counter the NAACP's economic boycotts. Through small rallies, websites and pamphlets, they have sought to portray themselves as fighting to protect their heritage and values. The Heritage Preservation Association even posts a list of "Heritage Violations" on its website, singling out white politicians who support removing the flag. Pro-Confederate groups say they have seen their memberships swell as the flag controversy has escalated. The Sons of Confederate Veterans, which claims a membership of about 25,000, said its membership is growing by about 300-500 people per month.

The League of the South, a pro-Confederate group formed by Southern white college professors, says its membership is also rising as Confederate symbols come under attack. "People who think the flag has anything to do with hate should go back and read

'The flag controversy has ripped off the falsehoods. It's put everything out there for all the world to see.'

—attorney Tom Turnipseed

the history books," said Clyde Wilson, a professor of Southern history at the University of South Carolina and a board member of the league, which advocates a second Southern

secession. "This is the flag that God has given us to represent the South." Wilson said the NAACP boycott will have little effect on South Carolina. "The only people who have canceled events so far have been some lesbian conference or something," he said.

And just as the NAACP and its allies have had some successes, flag supporters have had theirs, too. In March, South Carolina Republican lawmakers, including Arthur Ravenel, who called the NAACP "the National Association of Retarded People" at a pro-flag rally, amended a bill to create an official Martin Luther King Jr. day in South Carolina—stripping out the slain civil rights leader's name and adding a statement that Confederate flags are not racist symbols. The bill was sent back to committee. The House did pass a bill honoring the civil rights leader, but the language about Confederate flags was not removed. Black legislators say that allowing it was the only way they could get the bill to pass.

NAACP officials, enraged by the legislature's actions and the State Senate's "compromise" in allowing the flag to be placed in such a prominent position on Statehouse grounds, have called for a possible expansion of the economic boycott and a series of community-unity rallies statewide. "No one can say that we have not allowed this thing to work through, but we don't want our patience to be looked at as a sign of weakness," said James Gallman, president of the Southern Carolina Conference of Branches of the NAACP.

The flag controversy makes it clear that the question facing all South Carolinians—and all Southerners—is this: What face does the South want to show the world—the New South with its integrated institutions, black political power and international businesses, or the Old South, paying homage to those who fought to uphold the "peculiar institution" of slavery? "That's the question we South Carolinians are asking ourselves," said Tom Turnipseed, a Columbia lawyer and former national campaign manager for George Wallace, who has since joined many liberal causes in the South. "The flag controversy has ripped off the falsehoods. It's put everything out there for all the world to see." ■

EXCHANGE

CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

car enthusiast, is like the death-penalty advocate who critiques the *manner* in which executions are carried out: He merely wants to reform the system, not eradicate it.

Kitman notes that the "merchants of tetraethyl lead...are no better than criminals." Considering that motor vehicles are the largest source of environmental destruction (as reported by the Union of Concerned Scientists), I would take his statement much further by adding that the makers of automobiles, too, are no better than criminals, and, moreover, those who buy and use their products are their partners in ecological crime.

QANI BELUL

Gainesville, Fla.

■ From 1940 to 1945 I was employed by Du Pont at an Ethyl-owned tetraethyl lead plant at Baton Rouge. The management was diligent in informing us of the horrific effects of TEL poisoning, as distinguished from that of inorganic lead. However, we were assured that the lead spewed into the atmosphere from the burning of leaded gasoline was no cause for concern. The horrifying fates of the workers at the first TEL plant came to us through the grapevine—not from management. Though I had some qualms about the material the plant was making, I had no idea of the extent of Ethyl's cover-up until I read your article.

CHARLES E. REID

Windsor, Calif.

■ On February 13, 1972, the EPA administrator proposed a lead regulation in the Federal Register that would have allowed the sale of gasoline with 1.25 grams of lead per gallon. This decision would have perpetuated the myth that there is a safe level of lead particulates in the air we breathe, despite the fact that lead is a poison with no known value in human metabolism.

As a member of the Get the Lead Out of Gasoline Committee in California, I testified on behalf of the national Sierra Club at the Lead Additives Hearing of the EPA on May 2, 1972, in Los Angeles. We agreed with the EPA administrator that lead was better regulated as a fuel additive than as a tailpipe emission. The Ethyl Corporation, of course, wanted tailpipe emissions regulations that would have required control devices on tailpipes to collect the lead particulates before they were emitted into the air, but we wanted lead eliminated altogether. The committee had some very prestigious members, including Nobel Laureate Dr. Josh Lederberg, Sumner Kalman, MD, of Stanford and physicist Robert Debs.

One of the heroes of the battle to get lead out of gasoline was California Director of Public Health Dr. John Goldsmith, who, in a California legislative hearing on lead additives, referred to a medical witness for Ethyl as a prostitute for the company.

RICHARD S. GAINES

San Francisco

■ As Thomas Midgley's great-grandson, I'd like first to offer my apologies to the world at large for the environmental damage caused by many of Midgley's accomplishments in chemistry. A sidebar, "The Amazing Mr. Midgley," to Jamie Kitman's excellent article mentions Midgley's "four years of paralysis [leading to his death], allegedly caused by polio." To my knowledge everyone in my family has always believed that Mr. Midgley's polio was tragic and very real. I believe that Midgley even corresponded with President Franklin Roosevelt concerning their common illness and that the President responded in kind.

I would like to ask Kitman either to produce evidence that Midgley did not have polio or to withdraw this statement. Regarding the article itself, I found it very compelling and accurate on all other details of Midgley's life, with which I am familiar. In closing, I'd like to note that my 1961 Ford Falcon also runs just fine on unleaded gasoline—no knocks!

STEPHEN M.M. MIDGLEY

Dresden, Me.

■ I have a question for Jamie Kitman. Tetraethyl lead is still available in the United States as an additive that you special order. My father adds some to the fuel tank of his Mark IX Jaguar the two times a year he drives it. Is there a product on the market that he could add fairly easily that would prevent knocking in an old engine built for leaded fuel?

ABBY VIGNERON

Richmond, Va.

■ You may not be aware that the Ethyl Corporation recently demolished thirteen homes here—in the Oregon Hill Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Ethyl cited high renovation costs in its decision to demolish the invaluable structures of its next-door neighborhood. Maybe what Ethyl was really concerned about was the cost of the lead paint abatement in these homes, or maybe it was concerned that the lead paint dust would taint their adjacent corporate headquarters. If Ethyl shows such little regard for its neighbors, we can expect it to show little concern for the health of the Third World countries receiving its lead additives.

CHARLES POOL

KITMAN REPLIES

Palisades, N.Y.

■ Thanks to the many kind folks who've written and phoned to express their interest in this story. Americans care a lot more about their gasoline than most of us pointy-headed New Yorkers appreciate, though it must also be said that there is clearly something extra eye-opening about the news that we've been consistently lied to about a basic consumer good for close to eighty years. The recent debate on MTBE, rife with spurious claims, reminds us that corporate

self-interest unchecked and statements of "fact" unexamined make for supercharged forces of environmental destruction and historical revisionism.

Speaking of confused history, Joseph M. Colucci, former GM engineer, misses the point entirely. Nowhere did I call for GM to lead the charge to remove TEL from gasoline, though come to think of it, as they were the ones who led the charge to put it there in the first place, he could be on to something. With outposts around the world, GM is well situated to spread the word about the devastating effects of its invention, and such a campaign would do its corporate karma a world of good. Come on, General, your bully pulpit awaits.

Matthew J. Chachère calls attention to the hazard posed by lead paint. He is kind to suggest I tackle this long and equally sinister tale, but I'm looking forward to a book by David Rosner and Gerald Markowitz based on their recent ground-breaking work in this area. Their seminal research into the early history of leaded gasoline was most helpful to me. I thank them for it again and expect their lead paint history to hold similar fascination.

Thanks also to Stephen Midgley, but let us all assure him that he owes the world no apology. It's not his fault that his ancestor made some fatefully misguided decisions. Indeed, were more space available, one might make a plausible case for the view that both Thomas Midgley and Charles Kettering had high-minded hopes for renewable energies, speaking until the end of their days about a solar-powered future. Corporate decision-making beyond your great-grandfather's control—along with limited time, funding and the onset of ill health—surely stepped in the way of a more wholesome legacy. As for Midgley the elder's death, surely the inventor's family knows more than we do. But because lead poisoning was often misdiagnosed, I'd respectfully submit that the jury is still out on the exact cause of his final illness. It's hard to shake the suspicion that regular hand-rinsing in the tetraethyl lead fluid and free-form freon inhalations were somehow involved in his premature death.

There's an easy answer for Abby Vigneron's dad and his old Jag. Gasoline of sufficient octane is available at the pump without resort to additives. I know so, because since 1989 I've run a 1963 Mk II Jaguar, which uses a virtually identical example of the famous XK six-cylinder engine found in her dad's Mark IX.

Qani Belul, what can I say? A world with no cars? Good luck and more (unleaded) power to you.

JAMIE LINCOLN KITMAN

CORRECTION

The title of Frances Fox Piven's forthcoming book is *Why Americans Still Don't Vote* ["Welfare Movement Rises," May 8].

BOOKS & THE ARTS

Lost in Amazonia

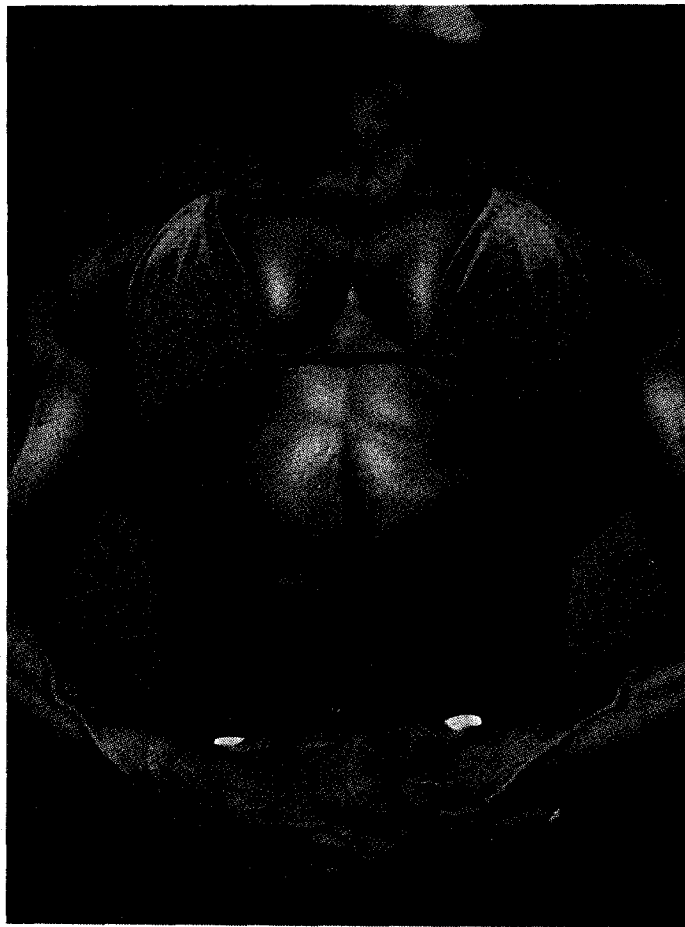
WENDY STEINER

After a century of repressing or deriding Woman as a symbol of beauty, high culture in the West has suddenly gone over. Victorian fairies, Pre-Raphaelite nymphs and sirens, Edwardian fashion plates and modern-day pinups smile down from the walls of major museums, and novelists such as Andrei Makine, Philip Roth and Penelope Fitzgerald examine female beauty as a central metaphor for value. Oblivious to Kant, evolutionary psychologists do not hesitate to collapse beauty into feminine allure, which they consider a powerful reproductive adaptation. Meanwhile, feminists excoriate Madison Avenue for reducing women's faces and bodies to commodities. For aestheticians, these are heady, if complicated, days.

The latest entrant in the field of female beauty only increases this euphoric unease: the New Museum of Contemporary Art's exhibition "Picturing the Modern Amazon" (until June 25). The picturings in question are paintings, photographs, sculptures, comic books, videos and jewelry representing female bodybuilders, those women for whom working out turns symmetry, balance and proportion into weapons of liberation. As the bodybuilder Nathalie Gassel states in *My Muscles, Myself*, "My muscle has been built to assert its power and presence: its movement indicates my life's fundamental principles which are to be, to do, to show."

According to this exhibition, to be a "hypermuscular woman" is to re-create one's body as a work of art for public display and self-realization. "You are an artist creating a sculpture," claims Heather Foster. "You put on muscle like clay." This process involves a double role for bodybuilders that is reflected in the title of Phyllis Bramson's painting *Being Both Object and Subject*. Many people would argue that

in this respect the female bodybuilder is just a special case of all women, who willy-nilly design an appearance that is taken as their identity. Several images in the show play up the parallel between bodybuilders and more conventionally "designing women," for example, Deborah Willis's *Untitled, Body-*



Andres Serrano, *Bodybuilders (Lesa Lewis)*, 1998
Courtesy of the Paula Cooper Gallery

builder #14, which suspends the red salon-sculpted nails of Nancy Lewis against the pattern of veins in her gym-sculpted thighs.

"The female masquerade" in the case of bodybuilders, however, is more literal, for it involves an erasure of "natural" femininity and the addition of a synthetic variant.

Wendy Steiner, author of *The Trouble With Beauty* (Free Press/Heinemann, forthcoming) and other works, is Richard L. Fisher Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania and director of the Penn Humanities Forum.

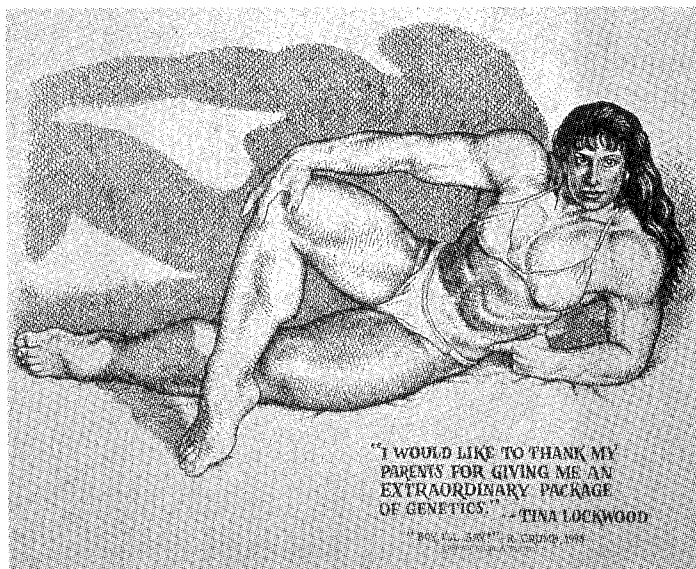
With body fat reduced to 5 percent for competition and steroids coursing through their blood, it takes silicone to give female bodybuilders breasts and "big hair," makeup and sexy lingerie to signal their femininity. The crudeness of the signs employed inevitably suggests brothel scenes (as in James Salzano's *Hannie Van Aken, NYC*) or transvestite parodies (as in Susan Meiselas's *Evolution F*)—an off-color aesthetics of nude muscle accented with fetish.

The exhibition stages a curious *paragone* between the picturers and the pictured as to which, in effect, is the controlling artist. Several of Andres Serrano's gorgeous photographs of the spectacular Lesa Lewis, for example, cut off her head at the jawline, as if Serrano were appropriating agency for her art to himself. The hypermuscular women at the exhibition opening, in their turn, upstaged the art with their extraordinary presence in the flesh. The curators of the show are old hands at subject-object competition: Laurie Fierstein, a champion bodybuilder who writes about the sport; Joanna Frueh, a professor of art history who is also a feminist performance artist and gym enthusiast; and Judith Stein, a distinguished curator whose sense of empowerment from lifting and pumping gave rise to the exhibition in the first place.

The rhetoric with which these curators surround bodybuilding is the exuberant optimism of liberation, independence and self-actualization. Upon entry into art, however, women's self-creations cannot help but become, as academic jargon would style it, "a field of contestation." Through bodybuilding, a woman may turn herself into a work of art, but representing that transformation turns her ambiguous. She may be either a creative agent or a victim of her judges; an irresistible seductress or a pawn of male fantasy; a heroic actualization of female strength or an unavailing compensation for female weakness; a classical feminine ideal or a masculinized freak. Dizzying contradictions like this always result when the "like" in an analogy is suppressed—in this case, when a woman "becomes" a work of art. The curators stress the euphoria of this triumph, but its pathos is inescapable. "I have a kinesthetic response to the real nude," writes Frueh. "In her presence I am invigorated, my posture improves, I feel my strength and flexibility, my capacity for

many powers, my allure. This, I think, is why she moves me to tears."

I would be willing to bet that the tears have a less empowering origin. The male bodybuilder Samuel Fussell has written that he "became a bodybuilder as a means of becoming a caricature. The inflated cartoon I became relieved me from the responsibility of being human." Female bodybuilders, in contrast, claim that the "inflated cartoon" they create is their way of *becoming* human, a difficult paradox, indeed.



Robert Crumb, Tina Lockwood, 1998
Courtesy of the New Museum of Contemporary Art

"Picturing the Modern Amazon" dramatizes as powerfully as any art the intolerable contradictions in women's experience and the desperation with which some search for a way out. The show would rise to the level of tragedy if it were not pervaded at the same time with the deflating breezes of the ridiculous. As Judith Stein observes, the major difference between a bodybuilder and an artist is that "one pumps iron, the other, irony."

The sources of this irony are manifold. Anything as extreme, hyperbolic and at the same time apparently earnest is bound to inspire humor, and everything about these female bodybuilders reads like a double-entendre or a camp subversion. Even the typefaces in the catalogue shift from modern sleek to comic-book chunk to romantic filigree in the course of a single title. The "muscle hussy" costumes look like a cross between stripper gear and the undersized tatters of the Incredible Hulk. The bodybuilders' "window performance" suggests the "performance art" of prostitutes in Amsterdam's red-light district. Circus strongwomen are called "understanders," not because of their feminine empathy but their position at the bottom of human pyramids;

understanders such as Pudgy Stockton and Dunlap Kaan hoist their husbands over their heads, a feat particularly pleasurable to Amazons.

Over and over, traditional poses display the female body to untraditional effect. When a bodybuilder puts her hand on her hip, she shows off not her breasts but her biceps. The first female bodybuilder with a man-scale physique, Bev Francis, mugged girlie poses in the 1985 documentary *Pumping Iron II: The Women*, to make fun of the pressure on competitors to look feminine. The demure bondage victim comes in for similar parody in Bill Dobbins's photograph of Laura Creavalle dressed in a few strips of leather, her arms locked in stocks, her eyes lowered, her toes pointed, her muscles bulging.

Female bodybuilders always appear to be quoting men as they strike poses from classical sculpture or superhero comic books. Renée Cox, for example, photographs Heather Foster with helmet, gun and thigh-high leather boots in front of a wall-sized flag; Nicole Eisenman draws *The Largest Woman* looming over the viewer. Yet the bodybuilder's steel-

hard muscle and taut skin find a female analogue in the pregnant belly and lactating breasts, and the hoarse breathing of the bench press sounds like nothing so much as childbirth panting. Samuel Fussell experienced his built physique as oddly feminine: a nonfunctional appearance of strength—useless, ornamental and masking vulnerability. In a similar gender reversal, *Pumping Iron* begins with Arnold Schwarzenegger in ballet class practicing poses in front of a mirror.

In certain respects, female bodybuilding seems no more liberated than fashion modeling. Indeed, the group poses in competitions suggest fashion shoots and chorus lines, and models and bodybuilders share an obsession over fat, firmness and "look." If they are "artists," they are artists of the body. But of course, the aesthetic in each case is utterly different. The exhibition catalogue makes this point by juxtaposing a photo of the rope-veined Laura Binetti with one of Twiggy standing among mannequins. The model, abnormally tall and thin for a woman, inhabits verticality; the bodybuilder, typically short or average in height and astonishingly wide with muscle, is horizontal. The ethereality of models

implies an escape into aristocratic sublimity; bodybuilders are rooted to the earth, plebeian morlocks. Until the recent fitness craze, models' flesh-lined skin hid any signs of functionality in the body except those connected with sex. For female bodybuilders, the absence of a fat screen and the hyperdevelopment of muscles and veins exposes the machinery of the body, and the darkly tanned skin over muscle and blood vessel evokes nothing so much as a flayed carcass. The model looks helpless and weak but at the same time flawless, invulnerable; the bodybuilder looks overpoweringly strong but "ripped," exposed. The model's smooth surface covers hidden depths; the bodybuilder's "solid lean meat," claims Marcia Ian, contains no space at all. Muscle "connotes exteriority, the exteriority of the phallus."

The language the body speaks for model and bodybuilder may be different, but both use their bodies to speak for them. One wonders what is wrong with their tongues. There is a story that Dustin Hoffman prepared for the torture scene in *Marathon Man* by not eating, sleeping or bathing for days. When he came onto the set in this pitiful state, Laurence Olivier observed, "But Dustin, acting is so much easier." One wants to say the same to these women who starve, drug and exhaust themselves day in and day out, giving up "normal" life for their art. Speaking is so much easier. Complain a little. Rail against the situation of women in this gender-challenged, family-failed, female-oppressing, love-starved world. Maxine Hong Kingston may invent a "woman warrior," but she gives her the power to express her anguish in words: "Nobody supports me at the expense of his own adventure.... no one supports me; I am not loved enough to be supported. That I am not a burden has to compensate for the sad envy when I look at women loved enough to be supported. Even now China wraps double binds around my feet."

After millennia of double binds on female bodies, it seems that some women can speak only bodily. Kingston reveals the revolutionary logic of their painful display in her woman warrior, trained with all the rigor of a bodybuilder. "We are going to carve revenge on your back," say her guardians, and she welcomes the message. The bodily marking of a woman may be unavoidably ornamental: "If an enemy should flay me, the light would shine through my skin like lace." However, this ornamentation is not powerless, but a mighty weapon. "I saw my back covered entirely with words in red and black files, like an army, like my army." And with this army of words written on her, the woman warrior assembles a real

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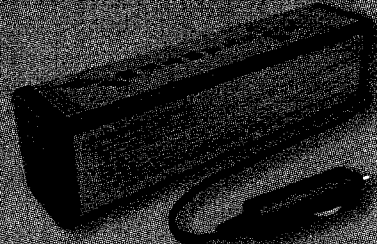
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army to avenge the injustice of the ages.

This theme of body marking is one of the staples of feminist writing in our day. Andrea Dworkin's "song of myself" is a "flesh poem" that male oppression cuts into her body. The slave girl Sethe's back in *Beloved* is scarred by a whipping and then transformed into a "chokecherry tree" through the imagination and kindness of a fostering woman. The point is to do the marking oneself rather than suffer it at the hands of others. And so the "muscle definition," the "ripped" flesh, the veins "like an anaconda that winds around a granite boulder" are supposedly proud marks of self-assertion. Barbara Zucker's steel tracery of a muscled back might as well be Sethe's chokecherry tree, and likewise the muscle outlines beaded onto Amelia Lavin's *Tigress*. Tattoos and piercings speak too, as in Deborah Willis's *Nancy Lewis*, but muscles and veins are the bodybuilder's true eloquence. No pain, no gain. It makes us cry, perhaps, but we might wonder whether it is ultimately an effective rhetoric. Will it turn into words and then armies?

Such is the tough triumph of the Amazon myth itself, which like everything else in this exhibition is fraught with grotesquerie and contradiction. Robert Graves reports that the Amazons were offspring of Ares and Aphrodite, war and beauty. Tracing descent through the mother, they fought and ruled while their men kept house. The limbs of boy infants were broken accordingly, to insure domesticity. Unhobbled, Amazons were said to have opted for another injury, cutting off one of their breasts. "One half pure woman, one half pure warrior," John Barth explains cheerfully in his postmodern rewrite of mythology, *Chimera*. The mastectomy aided archery and created solidarity among the sisterhood.

As the exhibition presents it, to reassert the Amazon is to reassert the matriarchate, woman begetting woman and passing on strength and self-determination as part of an empowered, male-disdaining legacy. The ancient Amazon myths spawned Rosie the Riveter, Wonder Woman, Batwoman, Xena the Warrior Princess and Kingston's "white tigers." According to the organizers, "the 'modern amazon' is presented as a culture with a history, as a dazzling and transgressive current phenomenon, and as an avatar of the future." She is the Magna Mater, "mother, chieftain, champion," and her images assembled in this exhibition are the remnants of an unacknowledged matrilineage. As often as not, however,

these picturings suggest discontinuity in female history. Kathleen Gilje's *Comtesse d'Haussonville, Restored* (1996), for example, shows an Ingres beauty standing before a mirror, oblivious to her reflection, which is a Robert Mapplethorpe portrait of the bodybuilder Lisa Lyon. Here, women's past and present may meet in the mirror, but they do not match; not every sister is an Amazon or, more accurately perhaps, not every male artist has depicted strong women. And of course, the meaning of

The language the body speaks for model and bodybuilder may be different—but one wonders what is wrong with their tongues.

matriarchy differs from culture to culture. "The complexities of defining such heightened displays of strength, femininity, and womanhood," according to Carla Williams, "are further compounded within the boundaries of a matriarchal culture in which black men's lack of power is deemed the fault of strong, 'castrating' black women." Matriarchy is no simple matter.

But neither is motherhood simple, especially for a bodybuilder. "Now when I was naked," observes Kingston's woman warrior, "I was a strange human being indeed—words carved on my back and the baby large in front." In the exhibition catalogue, the hypermasculine Bev Francis grimaces during a power lift, but on the facing page she smiles pacifically, surrounded by husband and children, her muscles, veins and bone ridges softened by fostering flesh. Can these two selves coexist in the same picture? Sarah Van Ouwerkerk's remarkable photograph of Jennifer Greenbaum's daughter lovingly leaning on her mother's tensed leg implies that Amazonian motherhood may not be a contradiction in terms, though the absence of the mother's face is disconcerting. Mary Ellen Mark, in contrast, shows a stony-faced bodybuilder hoisting a barbell over her head, oblivious to her 3-year-old daughter below. Hypermuscularity may not be incompatible with maternity, but even women artists are struck by the challenge of combining the two.

The most persistent fact about Amazons, however, is that all the myths end in defeat. Achilles bested the Queen of the Amazons, Penthesilea, in battle and then was so overcome by her beauty that he raped her corpse; his fellow soldiers dishonored her body, subjecting the double effrontery of female strength and allure to a double punishment. Shakespeare's playfully skeptical marriage comedy, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, celebrates the wedding of Theseus to the Amazon Hippolyta, whom he has recent-

ly conquered. John Barth's Bellerophon in *Chimera* defeats and ravishes the Amazon Melanippe but then redeems himself by making her his muse and scribe—no doubt a consolation as he saw it. For Robert Graves, the vanquishing of the Amazons is disguised history. "The victories over the Amazons secured by Heracles, Theseus, Dionysus, Mopsus, and others, record, in fact, setbacks to the matriarchal system in Greece, Asia Minor, Thrace, and Syria." Perhaps they do, but maybe this repeated

story is simply a favorite male fantasy. Unlike Judith or Delilah or Salome, an Amazon fights men fair and square, disdaining guile and sex appeal for honest brawn. She is a

worthy opponent for a man who enjoys a good fight, and heroes generally do. The preordained prize seems all the sweeter when the hero has to work so hard for it.

The battles of modern Amazons pit one against the other, appearing to leave men out of the picture. "To be, to do, to show." But showing—there's the rub. Display is tied to judgment and less rule-governed forms of voyeurism. Perhaps the most disconcerting aspect of "Picturing the Modern Amazon" is the utter incompatibility between the bodybuilder's stated motives and the public's reactions to her art. She sees display as a means to dominance, self-realization and artistic triumph. She is an "aesthetic-erotic self-creation," says Joanah Frueh, cultivating a "severe voluptuousness of form" and "fulfillment in carnal thingness." She is Umberto Boccioni's sculpture *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*: all form, all primitive force and abstraction. The audience, under the circumstances, matters not at all: "In the final arena, there will be no judges," Fussell quips, "only witnesses to...greatness." Nathalie Gassel reports her thoughts as she poses: "Ha! One more, one more, in front of those looking at me with their gluey eyes, wanting to feel me. So let them touch this hard body, so let them touch it and understand my muscle's determination to turn into steel. I know what they want. They tell me of their desire to be under my influence, to be enslaved by me." Tina Lockwood's photograph of Jan Tana—pumped, greased, flexing, with an imposing shadow rising behind her—expresses this desire to prevail without resistance.

But this is the wish of a naïve artist, woman, competitor: to enthrall, seduce, dominate without opposition. "Nobody needs criticism, only appreciation," as Gertrude Stein put it. We all understand this desire, but it turns the critic into a presumptuous irrelevance and ignores the fact that

art and love and competition are in the last analysis forms of communication. The bodybuilder needs an audience as much as she needs a gym. No matter how uncomfortable she may be with the "direct personal scrutiny by others," as Steve Wennerstrom calls it, the hypermuscular woman offers herself to judgment at every turn. Leslie Heywood goes so far as to argue that female bodybuilding assuages the "hunger for visibility, the hunger for the kind of meaningful life that powers late-twentieth-century culture.... the contemporary sense of being in America, masculine or feminine, might be summed up not by 'I think therefore I am,' but rather by 'I have an audience, therefore I am.'" The path from Descartes to Berkeley to Warhol is clear: To be is to be perceived, and fifteen minutes, covered in body oil, might be just the ticket.

But just like the Amazons of old who fought men on male ground, this self-creation through audience approval is a recipe for disaster. The novelist Katherine Dunn sees right through it in her brilliant fiction *Geek Love*. If you try to be beautiful it is because you want to be loved, and that puts you under other people's power. Instead of the Greek ideal you must substitute the Geek ideal, presenting yourself as if you could not care less how others see you. Is the exaggerated physique of the bodybuilder the answer? No, "technical, illustrative, and predictable." Perhaps a "flayed, emaciated cadaver" might do the trick. But no again: "Classic and totally predictable." The "answer" for Dunn is amputation and other willed self-deformations, with lobotomy the ultimate route to P.I.P.: "Peace, Isolation, Purity." Perhaps the artists in the show who depict headless bodybuilders have this goal in mind.

As soon as the bodybuilder submits to judgment, she falls victim to fantasy and desire. The International Federation of Bodybuilding long insisted that competitors not look hypermuscular, since women would not be attracted to the sport if it made them appear unfeminine. "We don't want to turn people off," say the judges in *Pumping Iron II*; "we want to turn them on." Women, the theory goes, are turned on by female bodybuilders either through narcissistic projection or lesbian attraction. However, the more typical audience for woman warriors is young boys, or men who enjoy masochistic titillation: R. Crumb's *Frightened Little Man in the Land of the Vulture Goddesses*. Some men, like Achilles, fancy women who offer a rousing skirmish before succumbing. Gay boys and men, in contrast, might identify with the purport-

ed invulnerability of warrior women. As Michael Cunningham's "Dream Girl" describes her: "She wasn't regular. She wasn't a 'normal' girl but she wasn't a girl posing as a boy, either. She wasn't even a tomboy. She was herself. She was potent and tenacious; she was butch and femme; she felt deeply and fought hard. She was heroic and, like many heroes, lived a solitary, defiant life. Like many heroes, she could hardly have cared less about satisfying the dictates of conventional taste."

It is geek love all over again, adoration of those who couldn't care less and who show their indifference through an aesthetics of disdain: Joanna Frueh's "Aphrodite/Amazon" with her "monster/beauty." The failure of this alleged invulnerability is apparent in Louise Bourgeois's *St. Sebastienne*. As with Serrano's photos, the bodybuilder's head is omitted, for the speaking body is as oblivious to women's brains and emotions as the most blatantly sexist pin-up. The body is pure surface, a contour map of protuberances and hollows, and as such, it also resembles a target for the arrows of observers. If medieval art imaged love as the exchange of barbed eye beams, in *St. Sebastienne* the arrows indicate no mutuality of scrutiny and promise nothing but victimization and pain. Here hypermuscularity becomes a new form of martyrdom.

Perhaps no work in the exhibition interprets the contradictions of the modern Amazon more clearly than Judy Chicago's *Arcaenum in Shades of Gray*. It consists of a lamination of glass sheets on a base, with the outlines of female bodybuilders incised into them. If you stand in front and look through, you see a scrambling palimpsest of hulking figures with multiple arms, legs, and breasts, like a hypermuscular Indian goddess. Every change in viewing position realigns the sheets of glass and increases the impression of vigor and motion. On the base of the sculpture are the words "Picturing Modern Amazons." In addition, each pane has two words at the bottom. Read across, the words are: "Female" and "Power" on one pane; "Body" and "Pleasure" on the next; and "Building" and "Perversion" on the last. Read from front to back, the left side produces "Female" "Body" "Building"; and the right "Power" "Pleasure" "Perversion." These heterogeneous judgments are visible only by looking between the panes—into the "arcanum" of the artwork. Otherwise, the image conveys only the official face of women's bodybuilding: strength, energy and assertiveness as unambiguously positive values. The reality, however, lies in the shades of gray.

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and we all know which he chose. But his mistake lay not in preferring Beauty but in accepting the premise that the three virtues were separable, indeed mutually exclusive. The old circus poster of the strong lady

calls the lie to this assumption, heralding the marvel of "Strength and Beauty" in a single female form. If we could only return Wisdom to the mix, we might end up with something resembling a woman. ■

The Intervention Blues

IAN WILLIAMS

DELIVER US FROM EVIL: Peacekeepers, Warlords and a World of Endless Conflict.

By William Shawcross. Simon & Schuster. 447 pp. \$27.

Perhaps one of the most fatuous theories ever promulgated was Francis Fukuyama's "End of History," put forth just as, in most parts of the world, history resumed its sanguinary progress as soon as the cold war ended.

Equally bad was Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" postulate, an attempt to find a Communist threat in another guise to give shape to our worldview.

Despite such failures of metahistorical analysis, one can't help wishing that William Shawcross had more of an overarching vision to hold together the gloomy sprawl of his new book, *Deliver Us From Evil*. Is this a book about the conflicts? Is it about the successes and failures of the United Nations? Does it show how, having sown the seeds of war across the world for decades, the great powers have now left them to grow unchecked and untended? Shawcross touches on all these questions but never truly provides an answer to any of them.

Shawcross, a journalist perhaps best known for his 1979 work on the secret US bombing of Cambodia, *Sideshow*, had unparalleled access to the UN and its senior officials for his research. The scuttlebutt there was that he was writing a biography of Secretary General Kofi Annan—which would have yielded a much more focused book. As it is, *Deliver Us From Evil* finds Shawcross forever in the air with the Secretary General, jetting or, more modestly, propelling from crisis to crisis. Yet access is a mixed blessing for a journalist; proximity often breeds too much contentment with the subjects, who in this book are mostly UN officials. And while it is true that those officials are often needlessly and even unjustly vilified, still, their works merit closer scrutiny and occasionally harsher criticism than they get here. Shawcross also suffers from the dilemma Milton found in *Paradise Lost*: The bad guys are commonly much more interesting than his heroes, many of whom are not exactly acting in

the heroic mode when we see them.

"What are the particular problems faced by a Japanese UN official in the Balkans, a Canadian General caught in genocide in Rwanda?" Shawcross asks rhetorically near the beginning, adding, "I hope this book shows in some part how difficult, if not impossible, their decisions are, faced with the conflicting demands of politicians at home, members of the Security Council, generals on the ground and the evil which they attempt to face down."

Yet it seems inappropriate, indeed almost sacrilegious, to put Yasushi Akashi, the Japanese UN official alluded to, in the same sentence as Gen. Roméo Dallaire. The former was in charge of the UN abandonment of Srebrenica, whereas General Dallaire, as commander of the UN forces in Kigali, had information about the impending genocide in Rwanda and was ordered by UN headquarters officials—ones cast in the Akashi mold, in fact—to take no action, apart from alerting the Rwandan government that its plot had been revealed!

General Dallaire, one of the truly tragic figures of this age, tried to save as many people as possible with the few poorly supplied troops left to him. Shawcross quotes him: "Dying in Rwanda without sign or sight of relief was a reality we faced on a daily basis." Unsurprisingly, the experience left him suicidal and depressed when he returned to Canada. No such feelings were reported from the UN headquarters staff or from Secretary of State Madeleine Albright or President Bill Clinton, who bear primary responsibility for abandoning the UN peacekeepers and the Tutsis to their fate by refusing to allow reinforcement or resupply for them, which resulted in an estimated 800,000 dead.

Certainly, no one associated with events in the former Yugoslavia noticed any excess of remorse from Yasushi Akashi, who continually argued for appeasement of the Serbs and resisted any effective measures suggested against them, no matter what the provocation. When such policies produced the massacre at Srebrenica, Kofi Annan, then Under Secretary General for Peacekeeping, had to write to Akashi to ask for a report on the thousands of Bosnians who were being reported missing by other sources. Shawcross's report on one of Akashi's missives typifies the response: "Rather than make an outcry, he suggested that in view of the vulnerable position of the observers, the reports be kept confidential." Around the same time, according to Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist David Rohde, Akashi was at a hunting lodge near Belgrade with Slobodan Milosevic, quipping about "a safe area for animals."

Akashi was, of course, merely reflecting the peculiar UN Secretariat ethos, typified by a private UN memorandum on Bosnia that Shawcross quotes: "There are always two sides to any argument." Inadvertently, Shawcross reveals what that meant when he describes a visit to Belgrade with Annan in 1996. Annan, who had taken over from Akashi, carried a million-dollar check from the UN to compensate the Yugoslav Army for damage French peacekeepers had allegedly caused to a Yugoslav barracks!

Somehow, Shawcross is not as shocked as he should be by this Alice-in-Wonderland scenario. The UN General Assembly had booted Yugoslavia out of its ranks. Belgrade had been condemned in more than 150 resolutions for the wars it started, in the course of which perhaps as many as 200,000 people were killed, of which 210 were UN staff, and during which its surrogates took UN peacekeepers hostage, shackling them to potential targets. And the UN's legal department had negotiated compensation to the perpetrators!

We can argue about the appropriate responses of individuals trapped in a system that demands the type of doublethink necessary to convince oneself that the victims are the problem. One of the reasons for this doublethink is that they had to spend so much time with such charming types as Milosevic and Bosnian Serb army commander Gen. Ratko Mladic. Similarly, one cannot help thinking that Shawcross has spent so much time with senior UN officials that he cuts them far too much slack. That's not entirely surprising: They are often erudite, charming and humane people. But rocking the boat is

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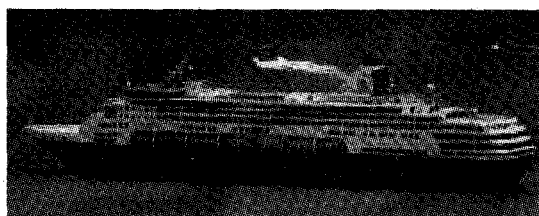
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not part of their job description.

One particular trope that such officials often invoked was the Mogadishu Line. On one level this refers to the US unwillingness to get involved in UN operations involving possible casualties. In fact, the US conducted a freelance operation in Somalia, without telling the UN commanders, and then blamed the UN for the disaster. As if they were grabbing at a headline-writers' tag to disguise the absence of any actual principle, UN officials cited "the Mogadishu Line" as an excuse not to take sides, no matter what barbarities were being committed.

Yet the real line is not the Mogadishu Line but the thugs' line, checkpoints thrown up by local bullies which the UN would refuse to cross. For example, in Cambodia the UN proclivity to kowtowing allowed the Khmer Rouge to chase the UN out of large tracts of the country and Hun Sen to conduct a low-level reign of terror in the rest, setting the conditions for the debacle of an election in 1998.

Indeed, Kofi Annan is a harsher critic of himself and of the UN than Shawcross is. At least Annan learned his lessons from his experiences when he referred to "an institutional ideology of impartiality even when confronted with attempted genocide," in his 1999 Report on Srebrenica—a lesson he repeated after the report on the UN's role in Rwanda. For many UN watchers, those reports were not much of a revelation in themselves factually, but they were remarkable for their unprecedented candor. It is worth remembering that these inquiries were not instigated by a UN desire to learn from its mistakes. One was the product of a General Assembly resolution moved by Bosnia, and the other was the result of an international uproar.

The only prominent UN staff member to resign on principle during this post-cold war period was Denis Halliday, who left in protest over the effects of sanctions on Iraqi civilians. Shawcross does not mention Halliday's resignation, a striking omission if he really wanted to explore the moral quandaries of working for the UN in ethically and politically dubious circumstances.

The UN Charter is based on a combination of liberal sentiments and stark realpolitik. It says that the rest of the world will use overwhelming military force to stop any country that threatens the peace. Strangely, while many people think bombing is the antithesis of everything the UN stands for, Article 45 in fact envisages that in order to "take urgent military measures," members should hold ready "national air force contingents for combined international en-

forcement action." The context does not imply that they would be used for leafleting.

In the absence of any such intention by the military powers for the past fifty years, the UN Secretariat developed its own particular metaphysical belief in negotiations, even though, over and over again, against Hun Sen and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, Milosevic in Serbia and Saddam Hussein in Iraq, the same painful lesson was hammered home. These were not gentlemen whose word was their bond; speaking quietly was useless without a big stick.

In the end, Shawcross considers but admits he has no definitive answers to the questions posed by Annan's new doctrine of humanitarian intervention. "Not everything can be achieved, not every wrong can be righted simply because the international community desires it. We cannot suddenly rebuild failed states or failing territories in our own image." He also correctly points out that such actions may not have popular support in the countries that are carrying out the interventions—and may do more harm than good if carried out in a halfhearted way.

However, as the historian of the effects of the original US intervention in Cambodia, Shawcross could perhaps have made more of how many of these conflicts are the direct result of previous (often inhumane) interventions. The UN's failures in Somalia, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Angola, Haiti, even Ethiopia and Eritrea, are all the products of cold war successes and excesses, in which "our sons of bitches" were armed and financed against the others'. Even Saddam Hussein is partly the product of a decade of Western support for a megalomaniac—particularly in his bloody war against Iran, which suited US strategy. In most of these conflicts, it is more than a little hypocritical to start pointing the finger at morally feckless natives, so late in the development of tragedies where outsiders have been the directors and producers from the beginning.

It is odd that the UN should have come closest to this realization under the gentle Kofi Annan, who, Shawcross tells us, concludes belatedly that "there are times when the use of force may be legitimate in the pursuit of peace." Somehow, Shawcross finds that "overall, this is a hopeful story." Not if you are a woman in Kabul, a Chechen in Grozny, a multiple amputee in Freetown or a Congolese with half a dozen lawless and armed factions milling about, it isn't.

Taking up Annan's provocative call for humanitarian intervention, Shawcross claims that "a new global architecture is

being built upon the international system that was constructed after the Second World War." However, some of that architecture is gingerbread designed to cover the original structure. Yes, the international criminal tribunals established to deal with war

crimes are a welcome innovation. But if the original UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights had been taken seriously, then the crimes they are seeking to try might not have been committed with such seeming impunity. ■

THEATER

Stoppard in Love

ELIZABETH POCHODA

THE REAL THING • THE INVENTION OF LOVE

A good new play is supposed to trigger interest in producing a writer's earlier pieces, but in New York it works the other way around now. You probably need a hugely successful revival like the superb production of Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing* (1982), which has just opened on Broadway, to nudge a nervous producer toward a recent work like *The Invention of Love*. But that's just New York. Stoppard's *Invention* has already had separate and successful runs in San Francisco and Philadelphia this season. Too long, too intellectual, too expensive (the cast is large) was the word on bringing it to New York after its London debut in 1997. Too bad. If Michael Frayn's play about quantum physics, *Copenhagen*, can appear on Broadway, so, I would think, could the Wilma theater of Philadelphia's wonderful production of Stoppard. And, failing that, what about Lincoln Center, where Stoppard's *Arcadia* had a critically successful run in 1995? But now, maybe because of *The Real Thing* or maybe because word of the Wilma's success has finally reached New York, there are suddenly convincing rumors that either this season or next the new play will finally appear. Look forward to it.

Down in Philadelphia they aren't afraid of Stoppard, which is probably why Blanka Zizka's production is so rewarding. But they do admire him. Enough to slow a little the intimidating pace at which his plays are usually done, so you can see if you get the jokes and follow the ideas. *The Invention of Love* is long, but so what? I didn't see empty seats after the intermission, which isn't always true with Stoppard (not that that's so important). And the theater had prepared a glossary, another nice idea, although not one I think New York audiences would welcome, even though their knowledge of Latin, Greek and classical scholarship can't be any greater than that of people eighty miles to the south. But glossary or

no, the play—about A.E. Housman, the late Victorian poet and eminent Latin scholar—communicates its ideas and emotions despite and because of its erudition. That is one of the miracles of Stoppard's best work: Even in the absence of familiarity with chaos theory (*Arcadia*) or, in this case, classical scholarship, there is always this subterranean thrill working on you, a thrill that must be very like the one that animated the playwright and autodidact as he was researching and writing. That's how the ideas get across, if you let them. Then too—and this is something the Wilma production excelled at showing—Stoppard is a great explainer, if you relax and give him the chance.

The play begins in 1877 as the elderly Housman, AEH (Martin Rayner), dreams he is being ferried across the Styx. Instead of meeting the Gorgons, Furies and Harpies of Hades, he revisits his younger self, Housman (Mark Alhadeff), during his years at Oxford, when an unrequited love for his heterosexual friend, Moses Jackson, disturbed the equilibrium of his passion for classical texts. Oxford scholars Walter Pater, John Ruskin, Benjamin Jowett and Mark Pattison wander through the first act playing croquet and talking, talking, talking foolishly and well about scholarship, beauty and beastliness (Oxford slang for homosexuality). The act concludes with a daringly long dialogue between AEH and Housman on the Golden Age, the love between men in classical literature and the accuracy of texts. The delightful set has a foot in two worlds: half Rem Koolhaas, half Lewis Carroll, an appropriately Stoppard-

ian mix. The performances of Housman young and old are excellent too, the one as juicy as the other is dry.

Act II follows Housman to London, where he becomes a minor civil servant pursuing Latin scholarship after hours until eventually it becomes a savage and sublime sublimation of his love for Jackson, the winning classical side of a divided nature. Here journalists Frank Harris, W.T. Stead and Henry Labouchere appear, tribunes of the sensationalist press, which relishes the repressive moral legislation, especially about homosexuality, without which a newspaper's extravagant dramas of shame cannot be staged. The trial of Oscar Wilde, who also appears, is not far behind.

This is a play of dramatic ideas and the emotions embedded in those ideas. Those who think of Stoppard as exclusively and annoyingly cerebral are right only if they define emotion exclusively as the triumph of the therapeutic. Asked why he never sent Jackson the love poems not included in *A Shropshire Lad*, AEH replies that "Confession is an act of violence against the unoffending." Wilde (George Tynan Crowley), who gets his say, has a different view of this too-scrupulous behavior: "I took charge of my own myth," he says. "I lived at the turning point of the world where everything was waking up new—the New Drama, the New Novel, New Journalism, New Hedonism, New Paganism, even the New Woman. Where were you when all this was happening?" "At home," AEH replies. Neither of their sexual destinies is enviable, although both are heroic and moving. Neither of their views on the invention of love is definitive, either. Wilde insists that the loved one has to be invented by the lover, and the Housmans, both young and old, agree that it was the love poem perfected by the poets of the Golden Age that created the whole "self-advertisement of farce and folly...madness, disease" and so forth, that form creates the feeling. Very Stoppardian.

It is the drama of classical scholarship, though, that oddly enough offers the most compelling emotional punch. Instead of being a sendup of academic pursuits, as many reviewers seem to think, AEH's defense of establishing, as far as possible, what the poets actually wrote is miles away from the fashion of current academic critics, for whom such knowledge is irrelevant to saying whatever interests them. Stoppard takes the hardest case, the defense of useless knowledge for its own sake. Scholarship is science, in AEH's view, and "poetical feelings," he warns the younger Hous-

man, who thinks he can be both poet and scholar, "are a peril to scholarship." They argue the point, the younger self insisting that it is precisely loveliness that gives a voice to truth; they agree, though, that while the passion for truth is the faintest of human passions, even restoring a comma to its rightful place is a "small redress against the vast unreason." That act is, both Housmans say, the real thing. If these scenes with their occasional quotations of beautiful lines pass you by, I would guess, along with this magazine's former stage critic Thomas M. Disch, that you may lack the trait necessary for successful theatergoing—the capacity for tears.

And the real *Real Thing*? The play about love, pain and the whole damn thing, the Stoppard everyone loves to love, is now revived in a warmer, more involving production than the famous one starring Jeremy Irons and Glenn Close in 1984. Remember the plot? Henry writes a play in which an architect played by Max is betrayed by his wife. Later, life (the real thing) seems to imitate art as Max's wife, Annie, leaves him for Henry. Later still, Annie betrays Max with Billy. A crude summary of a plot in which life doesn't actually imitate art at all. Stephen Dillane as the playwright, Henry, is as good at delivering wit as Irons but less frightening, which probably accounts for the steep increase in his adorability quotient. Jennifer Ehle as Annie is sexier than I remember Glenn Close being, entirely convincing in that her charms are equal in significance to Henry's wit, no easy task. The rest of the cast is overshadowed by these two; this is not an ensemble piece, but that's all right. The pace is still as brisk as the wit, making the rush toward Henry's undoing seem at first a cruel form of revenge on the tyranny of the exceptionally articulate. The sets are oddly hard-edged and ratty at the same time, which is about right for a group of people who have no visual aesthetic; but they are also slightly too large for the action, for no reason I can think of.

I never entirely bought the plot line about Brodie (Joshua Henderson), a loutish soldier whose impulsive act of civil disobedience lands him in jail, making him Annie's favorite cause. But he does have the virtue of having written a criminally bad play, which occasions Henry's speech on the real thing. The connections to *The Invention of Love* here are interesting, as they are on the theme of love itself, the play's other real thing. It is more obvious now than it was eighteen years ago that Henry's wit is as much a defense against the new Dark

Ages of a confessional culture as it is simply "self-protective," as that culture would describe it. When Henry senses Annie's infidelity, he describes the bargain of love as an exchange of knowledge in which our one undealt card, the one we would keep to our-

selves, is dealt to another. It's a rarefied definition of love in an age that encourages all cards on the table all the time, but it's one that explains the absence of emotional self-revelation in Stoppard's plays and the presence of intellectual autobiography. ■

FILMS

On Tyson vs. Downey

STUART KLAWANS

BLACK AND WHITE • ME MYSELF I • EAST IS EAST

I was watching Mike Tyson knock Robert Downey Jr. to the floor when the thought popped into my head, "Is this what I want from a movie?" It was a pressing question. For the past months, I'd been seeing a lot of films that were so-so but incorporated better-than-average moments—for example, the one that was now unspooling in James Toback's *Black and White*. It's a film that runs 100 minutes, and at the rate it was going, I figured I was going to enjoy about 66 of them. Could I run a review that simply said, "Two-thirds"? There had to be a better measure. So I decided Toback had done me a service when he made Downey hit the deck. If he'd accomplished nothing else by making *Black and White*—a loopy mix of a film, which is layered like a hip-hop master's samples—at least he'd forced me to wonder what's "good" in a movie.

To begin with the standard barstool reply: Who cares? A movie is good if it diverts, amuses, entertains. In root terms, that means it should turn you aside from weightier thoughts, cause you to stare like a hypnotized chicken or perhaps make you feel at home, as a good host would. I see the glimmer of an ethic in that last meaning. A film that entertains is one that invites you in; once inside, you find yourself engaged in a kind of *entretien*, or conversation. In that sense, a movie that meets the barstool test can be more than a pastime. It might serve a social function by making the world seem a bigger, more interlocutory place, at least for an hour or two—and who among us at *The Nation* would object to that?

The good news about *Black and White* is that its world is often open and waiting to be explored. White teenagers from a Manhattan prep school, led by skinny, squeaky-voiced Charlie (Bijou Phillips), delve into Harlem and the funkier sections of Staten Island, meanwhile trying on Negro identities for size. At the same time,

the somewhat older black crew around Rich (big-baritone Power of Wu-Tang Clan) ventures uncomfortably into the territory of white-run business offices, the domains of record producers and boxing promoters. As if to add an even more explicit mode of investigation, Toback tosses into the scene a pair of documentary filmmakers from California (Brooke Shields and Downey), who bounce around Rich and Charlie in a perpetual state of gosh-gee.

So far, everyone's innocent on some level, and everyone's on new ground. What's more, a fair number of these people are either playing themselves (like Tyson, who hangs around with Rich) or giving off personality like a thousand-watt bulb, as Downey does. That's why I decided the abrupt, hilariously awkward Tyson-Downey match was at least part of what I want from a movie—and that's why I'd describe the film's informal, catch-it-on-the-fly aspect as good.

But there's also such a thing as "better." It's a condition that *Black and White* does not attain, given that Toback also shrinks from the world and talks to himself.

Not content to throw together a collage of people and places, Toback added a plot, on the theme of guilt and betrayal. A fine theme; unfortunately, it's articulated by fashion model Claudia Schiffer as the world's least-probable graduate student, Allan Houston (of the New York Knicks) as America's oldest, most naïve college basketball star and Ben Stiller as nobody at all, other than a palimpsest of figures from previous Toback movies. These aren't so much characters as preconceived notions.

Thanks to Stiller, there's still some amusement and diversion to be had from this part of *Black and White*—but absolutely nothing to discover.

Is this to say that a film must have a documentary impulse if it's going to entertain in the better sense? One test of that proposition might be found in *Me Myself I*, a romantic comedy that's as genteel in its artifice as Toback's film is flighty and rude.

Written and directed by Pip Karmel, *Me Myself I* is an alternate-life story, in which an Australian journalist who's unhappily marking her thirty-umth birthday discovers what she might have become, if only she'd accepted that long-ago marriage proposal from Mr. Right. One minute Pamela is wearing black leather and sunglasses and writing articles for Sydney's hippest magazine. The next, she's literally knocked on her ass by a vision of domestic bliss. (She'd been lurking outside the window of a hunk she'd like to date, only to be surprised by the parting of a curtain and the revelation of wife and kids.) When Pamela falls again, a few scenes later, she awakens inside the fantasy: installed in a suburban cottage where pink roses trail across the trellis, and three snot-nosed children are demanding to be fed. Her first task, managed with quick sidelong glances, is to fake a few parenting skills. Her second is to deal with the shock when Mr. Right steps in the door, too tired from his latest business trip even to peck her on the cheek.

It's all thoroughly familiar, and yet Rachel Griffiths, as Pamela, has a way of making the familiar seem as habitable as your living room. You might recall Griffiths from *Hilary and Jackie*, in which she amazingly held her own against Emily Watson, despite being stuck with the role of the normal, stay-at-home sister. Griffiths has a talent for being normal, while catching the uneven heartbeat within. Long and buxom, with a good nose for staring down and lips that are always pursed, she looks like the daughter Juliette Binoche might have had with Sandra Bullock: from this angle a movie star, from that your neighbor down the hall.

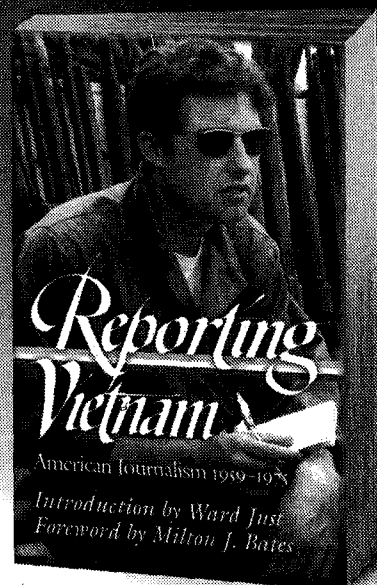
When Griffiths at last begins to catch the physical attention of her husband, she does it with a directness and warmth that are utterly convincing. At those moments, she reminds you of what's missing from most movies today. That makes her a discovery in herself: the new-found-land of *Me Myself I*.

So there's something else I want from a movie: Rachel Griffiths. Let the camera document her. Or, better still, let it

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document a whole group of performers, whose world is inviting, expansive and yet coherent.

East Is East is the directorial debut of Damien O'Donnell, who has done a fine job of opening up the play of the same title by Ayub Khan-Din. Set within Manchester's brick lanes in the early 1970s, the film tells the story of a Pakistani immigrant (Om Puri), his English-born wife (Linda Bassett) and their seven children, whom Dad is pushing away, one by one. Uncertain of his place within British society—this is the period of Enoch Powell's anti-immigrant demagoguery—he is also unsure of his status within the Pakistani community, which won't fully accept him until his children have married in. The harder he presses them to accept his arrangements, the more the kids chase after outsiders—a curious concept, since the children are fully English, whatever Powell says. The allure of assimilation gives the movie its conflict; and yet assimilation has already occurred.

Clearly, Khan-Din and O'Donnell are as concerned as is Toback with racial divides and sexual mergers. Still, I was surprised at the degree to which *East Is East* is genitally organized. The film contains no fewer than four major scenes of urination, which are explicitly linked to the tardy circumcision of the family's youngest son, Sajid (Jordan Routledge). As if to recover through symbolism what he's lost through religious rite, Sajid wears a parka through the whole film, always keeping its hood snug around his head. Only when Mom and the elder siblings have risen to assert themselves against Dad—in effect cutting away his patriarchal authority like a foreskin—does Sajid emerge from the wrapper.

There's so much phallus in this movie—and such a showy introduction of the vagina, for a finale—that the idea of sex starts to float free of the characters and their situation. Sex in *East Is East* means a genital urge; but it also means the desire to eat pork sausage, or the aspiration to design hats, or the need to be admitted without hassle to the local disco, as if you were as good as white. For Dad, it's a drive toward rectitude, as much as power; for Mom, it's a longing for recognition and company, including that of her family. What I like in *East Is East*, what seems good to me, is the opening up of so many desires, within a decidedly old-fashioned family drama. I also like the one nonsexual scene that sums up all these desires.

It takes place during a family outing to a neighboring town, where the Pakistanis

have their own movie theater, operated by one of Dad's cousins. When the family goes to the show, the cousin personally leads them to the best seats in the house, from which he kicks the current occupants. And when Dad says he wants to watch something other than the film on the screen, it's too bad for the rest of the audience. The order is sent to the projection booth: Take off that picture, and put on the family's favorite.

That's what you and I really want from a movie, and what we should want: everything, right now. ■

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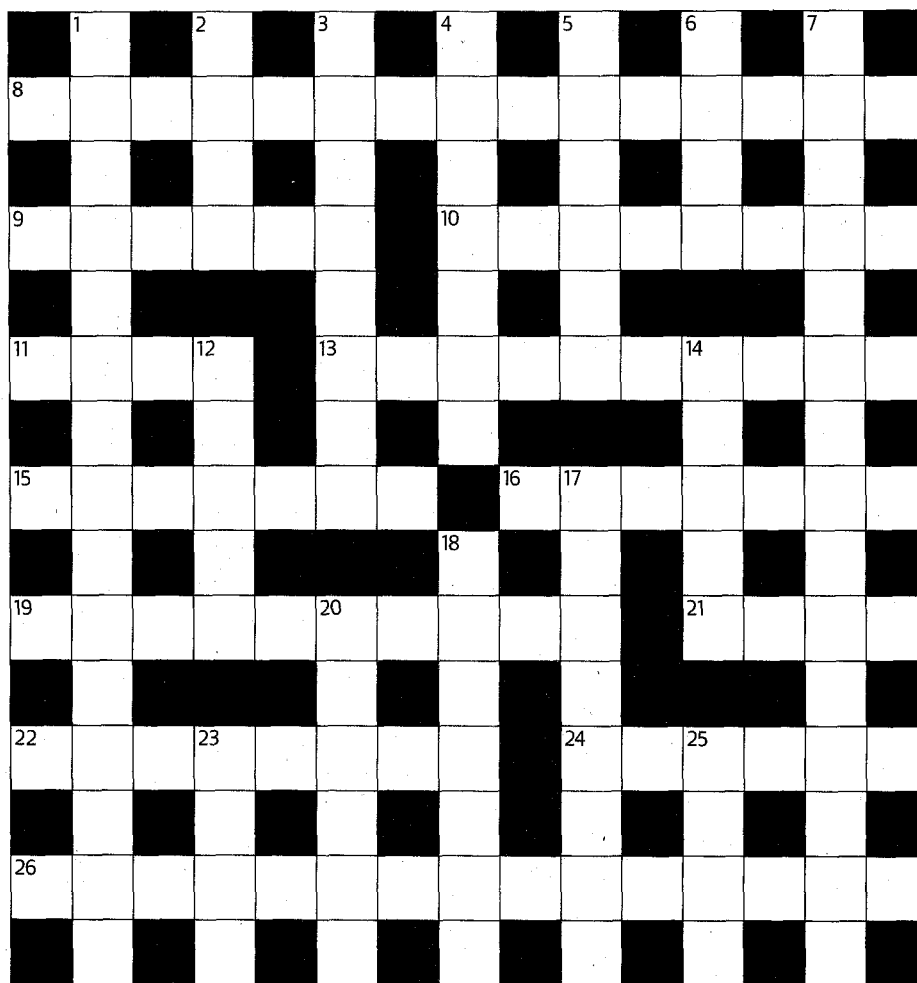
FRANK W. LEWIS

ACROSS

- 8 You and I attending the lady's dance get soon confused, but these could show you which way the wind is blowing! (7,8)
- 9 Possibly the planks of executive standing. (6)
- 10 Is one fated to be the sort who listens to music but doesn't hear it? (4-4)
- 11 In need, one might find trouble with the original trouble area. (4)
- 13 Can anyone's problem be settled by small things that bother you? (10)
- 15 One who doesn't immediately pay for a rough ride on such? (7)
- 16 Looked in stupefaction at the way the cyclists appeared, possibly. (7)
- 19 They're not necessarily sad denizens of the deep, but they sound like a color going to the country. (4,6)
- 21 To Caesar, you might appear twice in costume. (4)
- 22 Crew possibly showing how to save time getting someplace? (8)
- 24 This is concerning the French black painter. (6)
- 26 The reason behind having a harmless bullet at the firing area? You can't miss the target this way! (5-5,5)

DOWN

- 1 Not a hat designed for the first baby—some oldsters seem to enjoy it. (6,9)
- 2 and 23 One way to make a grin exciting. (8)
- 3 Have something you should clean up with the spouse when one doesn't eat alone? (8)
- 4 A container with stannum inside that certainly isn't getting any bigger! (7)
- 5 Doggone, it's this—but it's not OK to kill around it! (6)

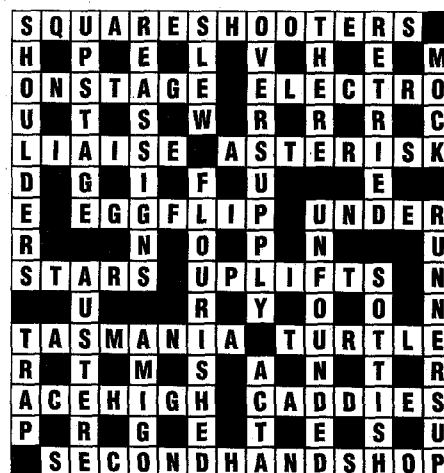


- 6, 14 and 12 A somewhat dated exclamation, but you have an excellent one to take care of you when you sleep! (4,5,5)
- 7 It could be a date, with what the bell does with a hitching process in the offing. (10,5)

12 and 14 See 6

- 17 Son, it's bad to get on your little bicycle when the workmen are out! (2,6)
- 18 The family starts to have plenty inside, but it's just a bit of junk in the main! (7)
- 20 The man goes to Castro's place, just to see Priam's wife! (6)
- 23 See 2
- 25 The spiritual says he used hickory bark for something he was building. (4)

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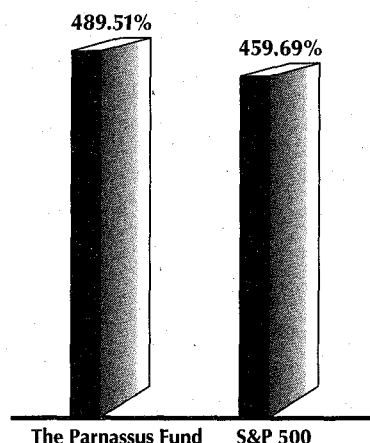
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